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# Pot-au-feu Japan: foods and weddings

Satomi Fukutomi

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, sfukut1@lsu.edu*

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*POT-AU-FEU* JAPAN: FOODS AND WEDDINGS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

by  
Satomi Fukutomi  
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## LIST OF INFORMANTS

### 1. Brides

#### 1.1. Actual Brides:

Yoshiko Horie, Kaori Kawada\*, Yuka Maeno, Hiroko Moro, Harumi Nakahara, Atsumi Ogata, Kinuyo Wakata, Hidemi Yamamoto, Mina Yokomori

#### 1.2. Potential Brides:

Yoshie Kirayama, Eriko Nishio, Sachiko Ohta

### 2. Wedding Industry Employees

#### 2.1. Bridal coordinators:

Yoshio Kawanabe \*, Hiroyuki Ojima\*, Yurie Oneda\*, Tomoko Samejima,

#### 2.2. Chefs:

Miyoshi Matsuda, Isao Nakamoto, Junichi Yamada,

#### 2.3. Emcees:

Mutsuko Onda

### 3. Restaurant Employees

#### 3.1. Owner:

Kikuko Tanabe

#### 3.2. Manager:

Hiroyuki Watanabe\*

#### 3.3. Chef:

Tomoya Seshimo

### 4. Airline Card Company\*

Yukie Kawashima

### 5. A tea master:

Tama Arai

### 6. A guest:

Kazuko Kezuka

\* Indicates use of pseudonym.

## ABSTRACT

As Japan underwent rapid modernization and economic expansion after World War II, its cultural complex transformed into a postmodern mingling of Western and Eastern cultures, merging modern and antiquated tradition (Heine 1995:29). The Japanese have absorbed many Western traditions without immigrating, or living outside of their own (Eastern) society; Japanese marriage rituals exhibit such Eastern and Western cultural minglings. Wedding receptions, regarded as mini-drama, contain traditions of old—material taboos, inedible wedding cakes, beer ceremony, the importance of the color white, as well as blended traditional-modern acts such as toasting champagne while wearing a kimono, and gift-giving rituals incorporating famous American jewelry store wares. Wedding businesses involve such rituals through the presentation of material cultures. This study seeks to understand changing Japanese behaviors and thoughts, asking why many Japanese choose to maintain aspects of tradition ceremony while engaging foreign elements of material culture in similar rituals—in this case, the food of a contemporary Japanese wedding (between the late 1990s and 2001).

Additionally, French cuisine is a standard reception meal for modern Japanese weddings. Combinations of Japanese, Western and Chinese cuisines are also served in receptions, following French cuisine structure: *hors d'œuvre*, soup, meat, fish and desserts. By way of the author's participant observation in and around wedding receptions and foodways of young Japanese females, this paper also examines diversity in Japanese individuals' consciousness toward their own culture and heritage, focusing on the intentional incorporation of Western cultural influences into the traditional Japanese wedding ceremony.

## CHAPTER 1. *L'HORS D'ŒUVRE*: INTRODUCTION

*L'HORS D'ŒUVRE*: A dish as an introduction.

In 1999, the third year of my stay in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, I had the opportunity of attending two wedding receptions. Both parties were held in the evening at the home of a family member. There was no reception desk to check guest lists. The meals served were buffet dinners that were prepared in one case by a bride's family, and in the other case catered from a restaurant. A living room or a bedroom was filled with many gifts from the guests. Each bride was dressed in a white gown, which she wore for the duration of the party, and the guests mingled with each other, the bride, groom, and their families.

I noticed enormous differences when I compared the wedding receptions I attended in Baton Rouge with those I attended in Japan. First, for the weddings in Baton Rouge, an invitation letter was mailed; on the other hand, for Japanese weddings the invitation card includes a post card that guests return to indicate their acceptance. The post card is returned to the bride's or groom's father instead of to the couple. The reception may be held in the late morning, or early/late afternoon at a hotel, reception hall, or restaurant; few people have the reception at a private home. A reception desk is placed where the guests check in for the party, and where they leave congratulatory gifts of money. Second, the food served at the Japanese reception meal is French, Japanese-French, or Japanese-French-Chinese. Third, a Japanese bride changes her costume during the party, almost as if the bride is a model in a fashion show.

I focused my research on weddings in a period between the late 1990s and 2001, and compared them with traditional weddings<sup>1</sup>. A traditional Japanese wedding reception is more similar to the weddings in Baton Rouge. Ironically, the modern Japanese wedding is an Eastern

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, I designated a period of "traditional wedding" the first half of post WWII period.

cultural tradition and a pastiche of Western cultural tradition, a visible marker of Japanese acculturation to the Western worlds. Further, the growth of a wedding industry including hotels, wedding and reception halls, restaurants, rental-dress stores, wedding consultants, and magazines has created an image of Japanese weddings which influences Japanese youth, their parents, and eventually guests of the weddings. Recent increased use of the Internet provides another means of media influence. Wedding WebPages advertise the full range of wedding services, such as locations, meals, dresses, rings, bouquets, gifts (for guests), honeymoon plans, advice for setting up a new home, etc. The materials advertised are provided from fashionable and famous stores that cooperate with other participants in the wedding industry for the WebPages to gain new customers.

### **1.1. Ritual**

In Ruth Benedict's 1946 publication The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, she discusses Japanese culture and nationality under the conditions of WWII. She asserts that the Japanese are both aggressive and unaggressive, both militaristic and aesthetic, both insolent and polite, both conservative and hospitable of new ways; these oppositions are symbolized by the sword and the chrysanthemum, respectively. The Japanese could simultaneously kill their enemies with a sword and love with nurture and chrysanthemums. Also, the Japanese are concerned about other people, especially what others think about their behavior (1946:2-3). According to Lévi-Strauss (1963:35), human thought is based on binary opposition. Although Benedict did not have structural binary oppositions in mind when she created her metaphoric title, the sword and chrysanthemum represent one of many oppositions revealed in examining Japanese culture.

One place where these oppositions are revealed is in rituals. Human lives are structured around rituals that are rites of passage, such as birthdays, circumcision, marriages, and funerals.

Wedding and funeral can be posed as binary oppositions, one serving to connect people, and the other to disconnect people. However, amongst the Japanese, both marriage and funeral are considered as “*tabidachi*” (departure): the daughter leaves her birth family to join her husband’s family, just as a dead person leaves his/her family.

Victor Turner’s (1969:94-130) discussion of the process of rituals, and the concept of liminality, is useful for understanding Japanese weddings and funerals. Both rituals have three stages. Liminality in marriage extends through the period of engagement because during this time the couple is neither single nor married. For example, an engaged woman is not addressed as Miss, although her status is not exactly single in that, for example, she cannot go out with men other than her fiancé. Liminality in death can be seen in Buddhism, one of the major religions in Japan. Buddhists believe that after a person dies, s/he becomes *rei* (a spirit) for 49 days, and then becomes *hotoke* (a Buddha). The *rei* endures a period of liminality, living neither in *konoyo* (this world) nor *anoyo* (heaven/hell) (Suzuki, 2000:47-48).

Aspects of liminality are demonstrated in rituals, such as an engagement ceremony to mark the end of single life, or the 7-day memorial rituals for *rei*. In recent Japanese practice, however, many rituals have become simplified, modernized, and even Westernized for some people. Clifford Geertz discusses ‘webs of significance’ that humans create, and are in turn trapped within (1973:5). Weaving a web for each tradition, humans reform or rearrange their traditions through time. Milward (1980) discusses Japanese affinity for modernization by asking: ‘imitation or invention?’

The Japanese are highly imitative. Before the Meiji period they imitated the Chinese. Since then they have turned westwards in imitation of the English, the French, the Germans and now the Americans.... For the Japanese have a talent not only for imitation in general, but also for patient attention to the smallest details. And this talent stands them in good stead in today’s competitive market (1980: 160-161).

However, we cannot just spin a web in the air; we need a point of connection. Ritual may serve as such a point, a foundation for the creation of meaning. When modern Japanese imitate a western wedding reception, or modernize traditional funeral rituals, they also continue to strictly carry traditional rules. In other words, Modern Japanese “Invent their traditions” which Hobsbawm discusses (1999:1-14).

There are two basic foundations of Japanese tradition upon which modern Japanese weddings have developed westernized aspects. First, there is the Japanese conscious orientation toward traditions in terms of the concepts ‘*hade* (ostentatious)’ and ‘*jimi* (quiet)’. Marriage is a joyous ritual, which favors *hade* (Interview with Kikuko Tanabe, the owner of French restaurant, June 28, 2001). The Japanese believe that Western culture is *hade* compared to Japanese culture, *jimi*. Second, family and religion are the foundation of rituals. A Japanese wedding associates primarily with society rather than with religion; marriage creates a new set of social relationships. As Japanese society becomes more westernized, wedding rituals are also westernized, including symbols and materials such as foods, gifts, and clothing. Western or Westernized materials replace old materials in a new Japanese tradition— an invention of traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1999:6-7).

The majority of Japanese are Buddhist, but in modern times, there are few Japanese who engage in wedding ceremonies at Buddhist temples. After 1900, wedding ceremonies were occasionally held at Shinto shrines because of Emperor Taisho (when he was Crown Prince Yoshihito), who was key in the innovation of Shinto wedding ceremonies. Crown Prince Yoshihito married in a Shinto ceremony in 1902 (Edward 1987, Goldstein1997, Katagi 1994). The religious wedding ceremony is the result of breaking national isolationism, and a resulting adaptation of western religious practices and institutions as mentioned by Ema, the author of

*Kekkon no Rekish* (A History of Weddings) (Goldstein 1997:34). The wider Japanese population followed the Royal family, and in current times the Shinto wedding has diffused. Christian church weddings became popular throughout Japanese society in the 1980s. In the early 1980s, the percentages of Shinto wedding ceremonies and Christian church wedding ceremonies were 60% and 10%, respectively. By the late 1980s, the percentages changed to 20% and 40% (Samejima, 2001). Milward states that,

Catholic weddings are becoming quite fashionable in modern Japan among others whose connection with Christianity is very slender” (Milward, 1980:157).

Milward gave several reasons for the changes pointing out that a Catholic wedding was much cheaper than Shinto wedding, and that a Catholic wedding looks *chic* and modern to the Japanese. Religious wedding ceremonies also contrast with secular ceremonies held at hotels or reception halls.

Marriage rituals and everything involved in producing a wedding, such as the engagement ceremony, the wedding ceremony, and the wedding reception, are carried out in modern Japanese locations like hotels or reception halls. These are designed in a western style with tables and chairs. Although the reception may be held in a restaurant, restaurants do not have special accommodations for weddings, such as dressing rooms and big parking lots.

The wedding industry, as coordinated through hotels or halls, provides wedding rings, arranges a bride and groom’s honeymoon abroad, and even purchases furniture for the couple’s new home (Goldstein 1997:1-13). The wedding industry offers a constantly changing range of services, including religious wedding ceremonies as well. The 2001 ceremony price lists of two reception halls, Meguro Gajoen and Aoyama Diamond Hall, located in fashionable subdivisions in Tokyo, show ¥50,000 (\$397) for a Shinto

ceremony, and ¥150,000 (\$1,190) for a Christian ceremony. Tomoko Samejima, a chief clerk of Aoyama Diamond Hall explained that the prices differ because of the expense of church equipment. Hotels or reception halls have already installed accommodations for a Shinto wedding. However, church weddings are a relatively new phenomenon and hotels and halls began to install Christian chapels during the 1980s (Interview with Samejima, June 30, 2001).

Traditional weddings involve a Shinto ceremony and a home reception: a “handmade” wedding. Modern weddings are conducted by professionals of the wedding industry. The modern wedding is like a French soup, *pot-au-feu*: taking various aspects from different cultures. For example, a bride and groom combine various features such as a Shinto ceremony and a western reception with a western meal, and make it a single wedding form. Although Geertz used the term, *pot-au-feu* to be against Tylor’s omnibus definition of culture (D’Andre 1999:86-87), I utilize the term in order to interpret Japanese wedding culture.

## **1.2. Setting**

The Japanese have particular and strong aesthetics regarding the setting of space and materials. A constructed Japanese setting is very simple, so that it will not conflict with aspects of nature. Japanese Zen gardens are well-known settings that demonstrate Japanese aesthetics of natural beauty. The gardens of temples are swept every morning to be kept clean and neat (Muschg 1987:13). Trees of the gardens are trimmed often, so that the trees keep their beautiful shapes. A *Bonsai* is a dwarfed tree in a pot, like a small version of trees in Zen gardens.



A Japanese tearoom is set up simply, as well. For example, in an alcove of the room, just *ikebana* (a Japanese flower arrangement), a scroll, and an incense box are placed, in a spatially balanced arrangement. Only wild flowers are used for *ikebana*. People in the room enjoy nature and the simple view of the room with silence (Interview with a tea master, Arai). Nothing should be ostentatious, and everything looks neat.

Setting is one of the crucial aspects of Japanese weddings. Hotels, wedding halls, and restaurants offer their customers rooms with scenic views, and provide beautiful settings in the form of room decorations and table and chair arrangements. Most reception rooms of the hotels are located on higher floors, so guests will enjoy panoramic window views. Generally, the reception halls or restaurants have only one or two floors, but have their own gardens to present a tranquil atmosphere to guests. Unlike the natural view from the windows, room decorations for wedding receptions differ from that of the Zen gardens or the tearooms. From the ceiling of the reception room, brilliant chandeliers are hung, creating a extravagant setting with or without the view from the window. Tables are covered with white cloth, and chairs are occasionally covered as well.

For the wedding reception meal, the newlywed couple's table is set facing their guests' tables, and there is space between them (see Figure 1.2.1 below). The space renders the couple as specialized objects, separate them from their guests (similar to sacred borders or boundaries, which in Shinto belief separate people from deities) (Pilgrim 1995:65). The couple can see, and be seen by, all of their guests. The table for the newlywed couple is rectangular and surrounded by an array of flowers, a wedding cake, and two chairs set side by side. Tables for the guests are round or oval shaped,



while bouquets and occasionally candles are placed at their center. Often the backs of the guests' chairs are decorated with a large bow.

### **1.3. Food and Ritual**

In a Food Culture symposium in 1980, Ishige, the director of the National Museum of Ethnology discussed food and parties. He said, "An act of 'eating' has had political and sociological significances. A "party" is regarded as an opportunity to celebrate a good time with others. In French, the action of sharing a meal is called *convive*, which means 'to eat together'. 'Eating together' is very important to develop a good human relationship" (Ishige 1980: 162 [my translations]). Befu, who studied the Japanese culture of gift-giving, stated that the social act of eating together symbolized a form of communion and a ritual (1968:447). In many places in the world, people offer food to guests to welcome them. Ishige mentions the example of a small village in Papua New Guinea, where people served food when they had visitors. Similarly at a Japanese wedding reception, hosts offer a meal to their guests even though some of them are not familiar to either the couple or their parents.

Food creates a nexus of people in any situation. David Bell and Gill Valentine declared that among prisoners in the U.S., the most pleasant and communicative times are during meals [having meal hours a day, sharing the table with others and eating the same food]. "Exchanging food and drink is a taken-for-granted part of many friendships" (Bell and Valentine 1997:49). The Japanese use food actively and consciously to create such a nexus; "The food shares all the qualities of a poem: it pulls together, in a moment of hospitality, a network of relationships wanting to be noticed and appreciated" (Muschg 1987:17).

The Japanese have a distinctive cuisine developed through their long history. The Japanese learn their culture by their tongues, nose, and eyes while they eat the food (Area

Studies 2000). Japanese culinary culture developed to parallel the four Japanese seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. “It is the seasons that can alter Japanese dishes” (Kreiner 1982:38). Moreover, Japanese diet is based on vegetables, grains, and fish rather than meat, since Japan is a country of islands. Furthermore, the Japanese employ distinctive food preparation techniques. For example, food is cooked with neither oil nor high heat, unlike other cuisines. Ingredients are cooked, although not fried, not stewed, not grilled—but *nitsuke* (Abe 1998). *Nitsuke* is originally a Japanese technique, consequently, the English language has no word to represent it. First, ingredients are boiled with just enough water to cover them. A couple of hours are necessary to bring the flavor from the fish into the water, and for the ingredients to absorb the juice.

However, modern chefs of Japanese cuisine in Japan, and even other countries, have created a new cuisine by mixing French and Japanese food in a single plate (Tobin 1992). Further, in the U.S. both French and Japanese are regarded as cosmopolitan cuisine compared to Chinese, Italian, or Mexican foods (Zelinsky 1998:249-250). An underlying premise of this thesis is that “food talks”—or that we as human often seek to exhibit our sophistication, political or moral learning by the food we choose. In turn a host/ess might attempt to demonstrate their feelings toward a guest by the food they serve (Pillsbury 1998, Tobin 1992).

Western food is a new step toward the western world for the Japanese. Japanese behavior toward other ethnic foods is to select aspects of the cuisine that they appreciate (Ishige 1995). Aesthetics and sophistication in borrowing results in a combination meal: Japanese + Western + Chinese food, which is typically served at a wedding reception. The evolving culinary life of the Japanese is not a haphazard blending but rather as evidenced by incorporation of

bread, a reasoning of serving combinations (see Figure 1.2.2). Japanese youth favor bread, although they never eat bread and rice together.

They consider bread as rice, the staple diet, and when they eat bread, it is accompanied by western food like ham and eggs, butter, cheese, and drinks are coffee, tea, milk, or juice. On the other hand, rice can be accompanied by western, or Chinese fare, not necessary Japanese fare. Although Japanese dinner is state-less<sup>2</sup>, it has a certain pattern (Ishige 1995:152-153 [my translation]) (see Figure 1.2.2)

The modern Japanese dinner table is state-less, as high table and chairs have replaced the traditional low table, and western meals intended to be served on a big plate are served in

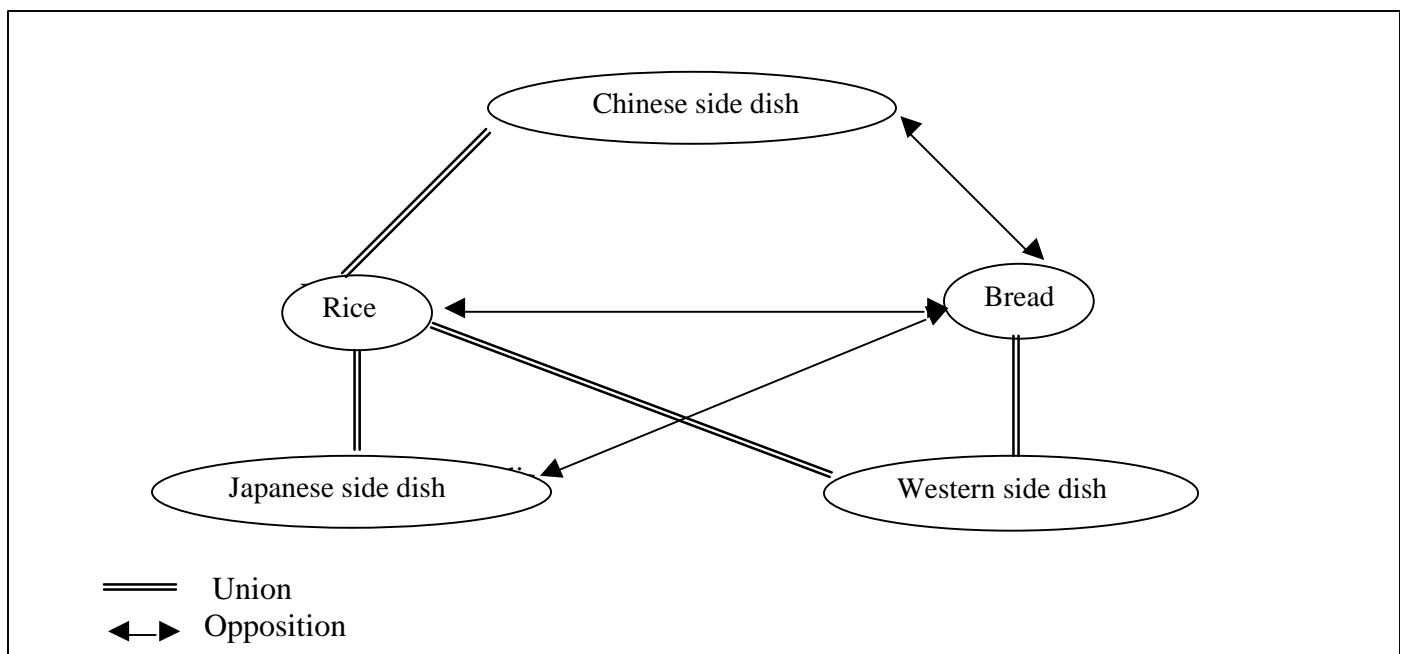


Figure 1.2.2: Model indicates the relationship between staple foods and main dish/side dish (Ishige 1995:153 [my translation])

the separate smaller plates of Japanese fare (Ishige 1995:151). The state-less combination exists not only at the dinner table, but also extends to weddings that selectively mix Japanese traditional rules and western culture, as like dresses and styles of the ceremony and reception.

<sup>2</sup> There are variety of foreign foods on the Japanese dinner table at one time, and the dinner cannot to be specified its cuisine type.

Japanese mix rituals, settings, and foods together in the creation of their weddings as if they were making *pot-au-feu* (a French soup which contains a variety of vegetables). Modern Japanese combine different ingredients, such as Western and Japanese ceremony, dresses, and Western, Japanese, and Chinese food for the weddings. The Wedding industry offers recipes for weddings based on different degrees of cultural mixture.

#### **1.4. Fieldwork**

As a Japanese woman, I am an insider. As a student in the U.S., I am also commonly considered an outsider to traditional Japanese society. As an insider/outsider, I expect that I can come close to Japanese culture, and seeing it from both emic and etic viewpoints. My personal thoughts about wedding rituals changed after I moved to the U.S., and participated in the two weddings. Before, I did not question the ostentatious and westernized Japanese wedding receptions I was familiar with. However, as I look at Japanese ritual through more of an American lens and begin to think about them differently, I ask, for example, why the Japanese want to serve western, especially French, cuisine at wedding receptions while they still actively hold to Japanese traditions. Miles Richardson (1998 class lecture) applies the two words ‘appearance’ and ‘personality’ (of a person), to elaborate the terms ‘etic’ and ‘emic’ (of culture). I am aware of the appearance of Japanese culture, and will address its personality in this text.

This thesis will explore questions of why Japanese wedding rituals in Tokyo have changed in distinctly different ways. Foods for rites of passages have regional differences, thus it is necessary to define the place of rituals, and the ritual foods. Japanese weddings and receptions are usually held in a hotel or reception hall, and the newlywed couple expends considerable effort in the selection of the meal, and spends a considerable amount of money for the event itself. The major part of Japanese wedding receptions, from a Japanese worldview, is

its food. Food maintains life and health; at the same time, it maintains sociable human relationships, providing joy to people (Matsushita 1991:Preface). Japanese customs of food-giving often seek to give power to others, such as gifts for a newborn baby ritual, or a seven-year-old ritual; they build up strength through receiving food from adult, or neighbors (Befu 1968:449). Japanese weddings involve food-giving customs; a newlywed couple gives power as happiness to their guests by presenting a meal at the reception.

At Japanese wedding receptions, the meal occupies about two thirds of the length of the party. For example, two and a half hours is the average length of the reception, and an hour and 45 minutes is the average length for the mealtime (Interview with Kawanabe of Meguro Gajoen, and Samejima of Aoyama Diamond Hall, June 30, 2001). However, in spite of the food's significance, Japanese wedding reception food has not been investigated in anthropology or cultural studies as indicated by the lack of scholarly literature on the subject.

In order to study Japanese wedding reception food, I chose several methodologies, including participant-observation, interview, questionnaire, and literature review. Japan is an egalitarian society and Japanese income varies little across the board (Personal communication with Clammer, August 2001). Taking this into consideration, my research drew not on distinction of class, but age group: 20 ~ 30 years old female office workers in Tokyo. However, I immediately experienced several pitfalls, especially in terms of participant-observation. Because most wedding receptions are formal events, a guest must first be invited to attend and bring gifts. Moreover, reducing the number of reception guests is of standard concern for the wedding couple. A bride and her mother commonly quarrel over this issue; the bride wishing to invite most of her friends, the mother feeling obliged to invite her friends and acquaintances as Japanese marriage is still considered to unite families more than just individuals. Benedict

approaches this in her comparison of American and Japanese marriage, saying that the American marriage was based on romance and the Japanese marriage was based on parents' decisions (1946: 120-121). The joining of families is proclaimed as the family names of both the bride and the groom are written on the welcome board that is displayed at the entrance to the reception hall.

Commonly an invitation card is sent two months in advance, and acceptances are sent back a month before the reception. Before sending the card, a bride and groom often know if their guests will attend or not, because they will typically ask some of the guests about their plans on the day of wedding. Moreover, in Japan, it is considered polite to attend a wedding if one receives an invitation unless you have certain reasons, such as being sick or in mourning. Because my time in the field was short, I could not arrange to be invited to a wedding as a guest; because guest lists were kept small, I could not participate at the last minute. Additionally, wedding gifts are quite expensive for a student's budget.

The Japanese tendency for formality was also problematic for my research. For example, suspecting that it might create a problem, employers of wedding halls did not allow me to enter the reception room during receptions. I asked one of the managers of a wedding hall whether I could enter a reception as a waitress, but the managers refused the suggestion. The manager insisted that the waitresses would represent the hall, thus I should be trained as a waitress before I entered the reception.

However, I was able to engage in participant-observation to a limited extent. I participated in two wedding receptions as a photographer. The two bridal parties notified the hotel where the wedding reception was held that I would take pictures before, during, and after



the party. As long as the bridal parties authorized my attendance, attending the parties was not a problem for the hotel managers.

In order to collect ethnographic material on the subject, I relied heavily on interviews with those involved in receptions, such as chefs and managers of the hotels, halls, restaurants, and wedding sections of department stores. I encountered differences between the managers of an expensive restaurant vs. an ordinary restaurant. If one talks to employees of an expensive restaurant, one will notice the high quality of their manners, which inevitably produces an interview more illustrative of the formalities themselves than intended subject matter.

Another interference was that department store salesclerks were not willing to be interviewed unless I got official permission from the advertising section of the store. “If you will put the name of this department store in your paper, you need to talk to someone in the advertisement sections. Otherwise, I am sorry that I cannot help you” (personal communication; June 28, 2001). Although this required significant navigation through bureaucratic departments, it was not entirely impossible only time consuming.

I experienced an enormous difference between being a foreigner and being a native while doing fieldwork. As a Japanese anthropology student studying in the U.S., I encountered suspicious reactions on the part of informants, and half of the people I approached were not willing to speak in terms of qualitative information. On the other hand, I performed previous fieldwork as a foreigner in the U.S., and informants had willingly helped me out.

As a subsidiary means of research, I participated in bridal fairs in Tokyo as a customer who planned to marry in the near future. I completed required forms for the bridal fairs with my name and that of my “future husband” who was a foreigner and was not able to attend the fairs. The label ‘foreigner’ provides reasons to ask any kind of question about the Japanese wedding

ceremony and reception. Several informants who participated in interviews requested that their names not be used, because they were employed by certain companies and as such, restricted from distributing business information to anyone. Therefore, some names of wedding businesses and informants in this text are pseudonyms.

My final method was to interview engaged and married women. In order to find out specific information about the attitudes of women eligible for marriage toward cuisine and occasions, especially a wedding reception meal, I distributed questionnaires to female workers between the age of 20 and 40. I also interviewed Japanese women who had married American men and lived in the U.S. to find out how they would observe Japanese weddings while they were out side of Japanese society.

## CHAPTER 2. *LA SOUPE*: TRADITIONS IN THE MODERN JAPANESE WEDDING

*LA SOUPE*: A dish to stimulate the appetite.

### 2.1. Marriages and Weddings in Japan

*Yuino*, *Kekkon-shiki*, and *Kekkon-Hirouen* are both Japanese rituals for *kekkon* (marriage). *Kekkon-Hirouen* is the major ritual amongst Japanese, because *hirouen* is a way to introduce the new couple into acceptance by society as members with a new status. Japanese appreciate harmony within society, and rituals of social acceptance are important.

Table 2.1: Structures and meanings of Japanese words

Japanese words	Meanings	Construction
<i>Kekkon</i>	Marriage	<i>Ketsu</i> (tie/bind) + <i>Kon</i> (contract a marriage)
<i>Yuinou</i>	Engagement	<i>Yui</i> (tie/bind) + <i>nou</i> (dedicate)
<i>Kekkon-Shiki</i>	Wedding ceremony	<i>Kekkon</i> (marriage) + <i>Shiki</i> (ceremony)
<i>Kekkon-Hirouen</i>	Wedding reception	<i>Kekkon</i> (marriage) + <i>Hirou</i> (announce, introduce) + <i>En</i> (a party, banquet)

*Kekkon* is made up of two words, '*ketsu*' and '*kon*', that together represent binding of two families through legal contract. '*Yui*' of *yuinou* is the same word with different pronunciation of '*kon*'. The word, '*nou*' means offering, or dedication, and indicates a giving of dowry. *Yuinou* actually means exchanging dowry for promise of marriage and in fact it is money to have a daughter from her family. *Kekkon-shiki* is a compound noun that refers to a wedding ceremony. *Kekkon-Hirouen*, a wedding reception, is frequently used as a term for the celebration of marriage in Japan. The reception is an occasion for a newlywed couple and their parents to display hospitality to guests by serving food.

Several foreign scholars have studied Japanese marriage and weddings. Ruth Benedict described almost everything about Japanese culture during W.W.II in her classic anthropological work, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (1946). She investigated how Japanese understood and approached their social life after the Meiji era (1868-1911), including their preferences and

priorities in life and culture, Japanese sense of ethics, and how the Japanese worldview could be seen as diametrically opposed to that of Americans.

Although the book was written in 1946, it is still useful in understanding aspects of modern Japanese society. In fact, although Japan has been subject to significant and continual influence from outside cultures through globalization since WWII, the traditional roots of Japanese nationality have changed little in just 50 years. For example Heine (1995) asserts that the Japanese still maintain their traditional consciousness of family, “sacred familism” in modern life. Therefore, I believe that many of Benedict’s observations still apply to modern Japanese culture. My investigation reveals that the history of Japanese weddings is still useful in interpreting modern weddings in Japan. The Japanese understand that marriage enables families to perpetuate and extend their family tree to the next generations. Especially back in the 1940s the purpose of marriage was to maintain family genealogy, thus if the marriage did not produce a child, it would be a failure. All Japanese men were supposed to have a son to inherit their properties, honor, and even cemeteries (Benedict 1946).

As frequently cited in the anthropological literature on Indian custom (Ferraro 2001:186-188), a marriage is practiced for the benefit of the participating families. For example, it may be to improve their economic status, or to maintain their caste system. As a result, an arranged marriage is common. Such arrangements are in contrast to U.S. popular concepts of romantic marriage, which emphasizes the importance of individual happiness over that of benefit to the extended family.

Traditionally, Japanese matchmakers played an important role for Japanese marriage and wedding because they arranged the first meeting of a potential couple. The matchmakers commonly contrive the meeting situation to appear natural or coincidental, so that the girl’s or

boy's families' names would not be dishonored if the couple decided to break off the engagement (Benedict 1946:180-182). Since a Japanese engagement involves not just the betrothed couple, but also the rest of the family (Fujioka and Iida, 1985), it is not unusual to go to a court, or have a lawyer to break the engagement. Currently, Japanese need professional help to break up just a girlfriend and boyfriend relationship, due to the importance of saving face in Japanese culture (Whymant, August 4. 2001). This idea can apply for both traditional and modern Japanese weddings. For example, an office worker of the Airline Card Company in Tokyo, Kawada, was engaged and received an engagement ring from her fiancé. Later, the fiancé asked her to break the engagement, whereupon both of their families had a meeting with a lawyer present to be the witness. However, Kawada's parents forced her to stay at home instead of attending the meeting. Because Kawada was not there, her parents asked her fiancé about their relationship, even their physical relationship. The result was that Kawada could keep the engagement ring, and receive some compensation (personal communication with Kawada, 1989). This incident reinforces Benedict's assertion that Japanese marriage still involves the entire family.

Another component of the Japanese traditional and modern marriage is the wedding reception. A reception is the first formal opportunity for the two families to get together in public, and the two common family names are both written on the welcome boards instead of idiosyncratic first names. Although some couples use their own names on the invitation letter, most couples prefer to use their parents' names on the letter, that is, their fathers' full names. The return card is always sent back to the father of either family.

Although Japanese have changed their lifestyle, its foundations are still the same as during the 1940's, when Benedict's primary research took place. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people commonly meet their partners through the Internet, or an *omiai* (single's) club instead of a

matchmaker. *Omiai* actually means to meet others through an intermediary, because Japanese did not customarily prefer to approach a member of the other sex in an obvious fashion. The matchmaker is no longer a human being, but a web page, or a bridal company that offers matchmaking services. The bridal company has commercialized Japanese weddings, and considers the commercial Japanese wedding as a 'cultural product': traditional-Japanese and modern-Western (Goldstein 1997:3).

The wedding industry activities and their advertisements have been highly influential on Japanese rituals. One result is the development of a complex duality of the Western and the traditional-Japanese during the same ritual (Goldstein 1997). Japanese have traditionally respected other cultures, especially western culture where, "...foreign-made goods or foods are regularly consumed" (Clammer 1997:94). For instance, the advertisements of a bridal company commonly use Western models in Western dresses, admired by young Japanese females. As Goldstein says, the wedding industry creates and sells a "lifetime dream"; a girl can be a star of the party. Companies work to understand trends amongst Japanese and create something new and unique; "The concept of trends or booms, trivial as it might first appear, is actually an important one in the understanding of Japanese consumer culture" (Clammer 1997:40). For example, companies offer several plans for a wedding by mingling the Shinto ceremony with a French reception meal, or the cake-cutting with a bride in kimono dress. However, the Japanese cannot imitate the western practices completely, because of the importance of Japanese traditions. For example, a bride's mother is usually eager to put a kimono on the bride, rather than allowing a western dress. Similarly the mother invites her friends and her husband's colleagues, or acquaintances to the reception, reducing the number of the bride's friends as guests.

Japanese mothers commonly have dreams of a Shinto ceremony for their daughters when the daughter is born. Besides wearing a kimono, Japanese did not previously have a religious wedding ceremony until the Taisho Emperor (when he was Crown Prince Yoshihito) performed his marriage at the Shinto shrine in 1900 (Edwards 1989, Ema 1971, Samejima 2001). Before that occasion, Japanese commoners had a wedding reception at home in order to announce the marriage to society. “Because the wedding is still a matter of family, parents are typically more concerned about how a wedding will reflect on the family as a whole; the couple usually want to make a more individual statement” (Edwards 1989:95-96).

The Shinto ceremony, *san-san-kudo*, involves the exchange of sake between a bride and groom, and drinking sake for the Shinto ceremony equivalent to a kiss in a Church ceremony. Three flat red lacquered cups are piled on a tray with a *sake* pot. First, a shrine maiden sets the tray in front of the groom, and the groom takes the first cup. The shrine maiden pours *sake* into the cup three times from the *sake* pot. The groom sips it from the cup three times. The shrine maiden takes the cup from the groom and gives it to the bride. Then, the bride sips the newly poured *sake* three times. For the second cup, the bride begins sipping the *sake* and the groom follows. For the last cup, the groom again starts, and the bride finishes. Therefore, the ritual is called 3-3-9 (Ema 1971). People generally refer to this ritual as *katame no sakazuki*, meaning that drinking *sake* connects people to each other. Along the same lines, the drinking of alcoholic sake in this case represents the transition from single to married status. Similar to Mary Douglas’ observations of drinking behaviors among office workers in the U.S.—“Coffee cues the shifts from playtime to work time and alcohol cues the transition from work to play time”—a group drinking ritual allows for group recognition of status change. From play to work, work to play, or single to married, the ritual is consecration of a new system of interpersonal relations.

The status change also brings other changes as well; a bride becomes wife and supports her husband, takes care of '*katei* (family),' often giving up her career (Renshaw 1999:104). The groom receives people's trust because married status indicates a new level of responsibility (Edwards 1989:116-117). The couple maintains the groom's (and sometimes the bride's) family lineage.

Edwards (1989) described gender roles in society after the wedding in Japan. In the 1980's, a marriage was [and is] still a family matter. Renshaw, who studied Japanese workingwomen, defined the importance of "family" for the Japanese from Japanese women's perspective: "Family has always been a central focus of Japanese life. The celebrated strength of group identification begins with the family" (1999:241). The family was not only the smallest social unit, but a microcosm of the larger society, reflecting its values and structures. Marriages create '*katei*.' In order for a household to be a good one, a wife needs to socially support her husband according to what Japanese think (Edwards 1989). From the perspective of many Japanese, a successful household is largely dependent on a wife's ability to support her husband by maintenance of household duties and other behind the scenes, non-wage-earning tasks.

## **2.2. The Wedding as a Mini-Drama**

"Weddings are rites of passage; they belong to the class of rituals that everywhere mark the transition of a person or persons from one social status to another" (Edwards 1987:51).

Japanese practice ostentatious ceremony for weddings, and in particular, receptions are performed as a type of entertainment. Goldstein (1997) characterized the reception as a mini-drama, Katagi (1994) said that it was *hade* (showy), and Edwards (1987) described it as a "commercialized wedding." The actions in the wedding reception show include the following: a bride and groom invite many guests, the serving of "haute cuisine," arrangement for entertainment, offering of gifts as mementos, and display of the bride's and groom's changes of



clothing. All three authors related the phenomenon of the showy reception to the popularity of the wedding industry.

Like all rituals, the Japanese wedding involves times, places, and participants (Edwards 1989). Regarding the Japanese wedding as mini-drama, the traditional aspect of time/temporality is maintained. *Rokuyou/rokki* is the Buddhist calendar, which has traditionally been used for determining auspicious days for weddings and other rituals. Each one of six days of the *rokuyou/rokki* week has its own symbolism: *taian* (the luckiest day), *shakkou* (worst luck, but noon time is lucky), *senshou* (morning is lucky and afternoon is unlucky), *tomobiki* (morning and night are lucky, but noon is unlucky)<sup>1</sup>, *senbu* (morning is bad luck and night is good luck), and *butsumetsu* (bad luck, the day when Buddha passed away) (Koujien 1991). *Taian* and *tomobiki* are the most favorable day for matters related to weddings, or *yuino* (Bestor 1999, Edwards 1989).

Japanese depend heavily on the *rokuyou/rokki* calendar for planning ritual occasions, thus a family has at least an American calendar on which *rokuyou/rokki* is written. Bridal businesses, hotels, and reception halls provide a diagram of *rokuyou/rokki* when a couple visits bridal fairs (Personal communication with Sato of Meguro Gajoen, June 9, 2001).

However, *rokuyou/rokki* is associated with older traditions and is often a locus for generational clash as Japanese youth are typically indifferent to its distinctions (Personal communication with Samejima of Aoyama Diamond Hall in May 30, 2001). Kirayama, who will marry in October 2001 spoke about the non-significance of the Buddhist calendar for young people like herself, saying that some hotels offer a cheaper wedding price on *butsumetsu* because

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<sup>1</sup> *Tomo* (friends) + *biki/hiki* (pull): some people avoid the day for funerals because superstition dictates that the deceased person takes her/his people to death (Kojien 1991).

superstitious people avoid the day for celebration (Personal communication with Kirayama, an office worker of the Airline Card Company).

As Japanese youth abandon these temporal traditions, they increasingly adopt western aspects of wedding-place. Currently in Japan, bridal businesses and wedding reception halls are increasing in number, providing access to all kinds of modern wedding materials: a chapel, church, shrine, rental dresses, gifts, and food (Goldstein-Gidoni 1997, Edwards 1989).

With the growth of the wedding industry in the 1970's, the ceremony was in many cases influenced more by fashion than tradition. Weddings in church as are currently very popular (although a bride and groom do not distinguish among Baptist, Catholic, or other Christian denominations). Some hotels and wedding halls build chapels inside, or next to the buildings. If one has a ceremony at the church, s/he needs western dresses and a western banquet.

In his article "The Commercialized Weddings as Ritual" (1987), Edwards discusses trends toward shifting the location of the wedding reception, primarily analyzing the relationship between commercial development of the Japanese wedding and its traditional role as a rite of passage. Japanese wedding receptions began as a home reception, then moving to catering systems, hotel receptions, and are presently developing as part of the wedding industry. Hotels, halls, and restaurants (with the expectation of Japanese restaurants) are designed with western-style seating of tables and chairs. The tables and chairs are convenient for most Japanese to be comfortable through a long reception, especially dressed in either kimonos or dresses. Further, the wedding industry makes available a variety of reception meals, in particular, French, Chinese, and Japanese cuisines, and their combinations.

Reception meals are the foremost marketed services of the wedding industry because they occupy two-thirds of the reception time, and a half of the expense. Many hotels and wedding

halls serve sample reception dinners at the promotions bridal fairs<sup>2</sup>. During the fair, kimonos, dresses, and gifts are displayed, while customers have the opportunity try on the costumes in a rehearsal of the wedding ceremony and reception, and to taste a reception meal. Further, sample meals served at fairs are reasonably priced such as ¥4,000 (\$32), or ¥5,000 (\$40), instead of the regular price of ¥12,000 (\$95), or ¥15,000 (\$119) at a hotel, or wedding hall (Zéksi: 2001).

Seemingly, the wedding industry is aware of the fact that modern Japanese are unprepared to cook and serve an haute cuisine meal, as well as inexperienced at organizing a party. The Japanese often need and depend on expertise for an occasion such as a wedding reception. “Watching brides as they run hastily from one ‘station’ to another, constantly urged by the producers to stick to the strict time-table” (Goldstein 1997: 28-29). As a result, the Japanese wedding industry developed to provide these new social necessities in a variety of fashions.

Participation is another vital part of the mini-drama; the newlywed couple, their family and the staff participate in the wedding reception and entertain the guests. Both an emcee and a chef conduct the drama, which in comparison to an opera, positions the emcee is a music conductor under the stage, and the chef is a property man on the back stage. At the reception, the emcee is on the front stage to conduct other participants such as a newlywed couple and their guests. The bride and groom have their own table, called the main table, in front of and facing the guests. The families of the newlyweds are seated at the furthest place from the couple because the drama is mainly held for the guests.

The bride is objectified during the wedding reception mini-drama in the sense that she is a doll who changes from a single woman into a married woman. For example, the bride changes costume in her journey from traditional Japanese to Western bride (Goldstein 1997:119). The

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<sup>2</sup> Although Goldstein mentioned bridal fairs as an important promotion device, she never touched on food topics.

bride is almost like a doll at the party, in that she "...strictly refrains from eating or speaking" (1997:123). Goldstein also referred to the bride's obligation to demonstrate 'self discipline' by quoting Beardsley: "...the bride is expected to look neither joyous nor sad but, instead aloof and unmoved (Beardsley et al. 1959:67)" (1997:123). Actually, the role of bride is typically represented as a commodity in Japanese society. For instance, if a family has a daughter who is 26 years or older, her neighbors joke to her parents, "you should give her to someone, or she will be bought with a bunch of other stuff (using the expression for stacks of apples, oranges at the market to refer to the young woman)." They will say to her, "You have to be gotten by someone" (Personal communication with Maeno married in 1999 at age 32, 2001). Both locutions objectify the bride and represent her as an economic commodity of dated value.

Japanese brides are also frequently referred to as a 'flower.' Neither a doll, nor a flower can talk or eat, similar to the bride in a Japanese wedding, who visibly does nothing. Since the bride does not eat, the reception meal to her is like a painting on the table. The bride can only enjoy the food with her eyes. For a bride, food does not function as food any more. Instead of providing flavor or nutrition, food is only for appreciation, symbolically representing a quiet, or beautiful bride.

The staff of the hotel or reception hall plays supporting roles for the reception, and they carry out traditional Japanese roles even for modern weddings. The role of the bridal dresser, a hairdresser to design special hairstyles, has existed since pre-war Japan. After Japanese stopped wearing kimonos in daily dress and were not taught from a young age how to wrap the fabric, hairdressers began to help the brides into wedding kimonos, in addition to styling their hair.

Bridal dressers carry out tradition based on the Japanese apprenticeship system, as other Japanese traditional practices do: *kado* (flower arrangement), *sado* (tea ceremony), the martial

arts *judo*, *kendo*, *karate*, and even chefs of Japanese restaurants. They require one to learn over 10 years to be professional, and to never stop learning. The apprenticeship system does not involve teaching but watching the master at work, learning through observation. If one wants to learn, s/he needs to appropriate his/her master's knowledge or skills by observing them. Further, each master has signature ways of doing things, so students sometimes need to forget about what they have learned from a school or under another master. A Japanese learning style is basically observation and imitation. The tea master, Arai told her students during a class, "You need to observe my work and steal my skills." Therefore, Japanese are good at imitation, as can be seen in the adoption of Western traditions and fashions into Japanese culture.

## **2.3. Symbolic Roles, Materials, and Activities**

### **2.3.1. Role**

Both traditional and modern weddings incorporate symbolic roles; *nakodo* (go-between and a married couple) and a bride are symbols of a wedding itself, and *yuino* is the first step of uniting a bride and groom by traditional *nakodo*. *Nakodo* is made with two words, 'relationship' and 'people'. The *nakodo* is a mediator, or the matchmaker of a bride and groom. *Nakodo* are usually married, as marital status increases a person's credibility in society. As Japanese tradition dictates, *nakodo* participates in *yuino*—at times actually conducting it.

At the present time, although the frequency of arranged marriage is decreasing, *nakodo* continues to be an important symbolic role for both the *yuino* and the wedding. A groom often asks his boss and his wife to be *nakodo*. The *nakodo* sits next to the bride and groom at the wedding reception and introduces them to the guests. *Nakodo* sometimes attend for the purpose of exchanging dowry. *Nakodo* is like the American or Latin notion of godparents for a bride, groom, and their families. Among the Japanese it is common that a couple should report the

bride's pregnancy and their baby's birth to the *nakodo*. Recently, in order to simplify *yuino*, or weddings, Japanese youth often avoid having *nakodo* for their wedding.

### 2.3.2 Material Culture

Although many Japanese currently prefer a modern and westernized wedding, some of them still practice the *yuino*; "The *yuino* was once a strictly family-to-family affair, consisting of the transfer of dowry from the groom's household to that of the bride" (Edwards 1989:78). The groom's family brings dowry to the bride's family, whereupon the bride's family gives dowry to the groom's family.

One of the gifts from the groom's family to the bride's is either seven or nine traditional Japanese seafoods and materials, such as dried abalone, bonito shavings, squid, seaweed, a linen string, and a white fan. Each of these gifts is symbolic, where *awabi* (dried abalone) means eternal life and immortality.

"(It) signified unrequited love, drawing a symbolic parallel between one-sided love and the abalone's single shell. For this reason, in the folklore of cuisine, abalone can not be served at wedding banquets although other bi-valve shellfish are often consumed" (Bestor 1999:162). *Katsuo-bushi* (a dried bonito) connotes a man's strength, and *surume* (a dried squid) is a preserved offering food to God. *Konbu* (seaweed) has three symbolic meanings: giving a person happiness, putting one at ease with one's immediate peers, and allowing a person to have children without complication. *Tomoshiraga* (a linen string) symbolizes living until both a bride and groom's hair turn gray (in short, a couple's cooperation and health). *Suehiro* (a white fan) demonstrates purity of mind and wide prosperity (Matsushita 1991:17-45). There are also symbolic changes in the way the names of objects are written. Just for a wedding, the original *kanji* (Chinese characters) of the food's names are replaced by other *kanji* that contain symbolic meanings. For example, the original words for *tofu* (bean curd) are 'bean' and 'rot'; for weddings, 'rot' is replaced by another word, 'rich', both have the same phonemes.

Just as food is symbolized for the engagement, the bride is symbolized for the wedding. A bride changes her dresses several times for the wedding. If she has a ceremony at a Shinto shrine, she should wear a white kimono with a white scarf. Now, the color white symbolizes purity, but its original symbolic meaning in Japanese is mourning; the bride was dead to her own household, and lived only for her husband (Edwards, 1987).

The bride wears her white kimono when she welcomes her guests with her husband and their families at the entrance to the reception room. After the guests enter the room, the bride takes the white kimono off, and reenters wearing a colored one. If there is a religious ceremony, the bride changes into the colored kimono afterwards, to indicate that she has changed status, and belongs to her husband from now on; in short, she is reborn as his wife.

Unlike a dress, kimono is complicated to put on and uncomfortable for brides. A kimono has no zipper or button, and uses a flat sash. Donning a kimono is similar to being wrapped like a gift with a sheet of paper and a ribbon, although putting on a kimono is not as simple as wrapping a gift. The kimono is too tight for a bride to walk, and all the bride can do, or is allowed to do, is raise her hands for *san-san-kudo* (sake exchange in the Shinto ceremony). Such inconvenience keeps many Japanese women from wearing the kimono, and as a result not so many women know how to wear it unless they go to a kimono school (which used to be one of the required etiquette schools before marriage). The wedding halls even have contracted bridal dressers who help a bride dressed in the kimonos (Goldstein 1997).

Japanese culture, ritual, food, and dress are combinations of tradition and westernization, thus it is not unique to weddings. A bride may wear a kimono and then a western dress during a single wedding reception, or she may have a Shinto ceremony and a western reception. Cake-cutting, candle lighting, and flower presentation are three wedding reception rituals (Charsley

1987, Edwards 1987). Although they are western elements, through time they became distinctive symbols in Japanese weddings. During the reception, the bride may leave to change from the white kimono to a white gown. Now, the traditional bride is reborn as a western bride for the western segment of the ceremony—cake-cutting—a ceremony performed by a bride and groom in public. The couple demonstrates little intimacy in public, and do not even kiss at the wedding ceremony. After the ceremony, there is still another dress left for the bride to put on.

While the guests are having their meal, the bride leaves to change into an evening gown for the candle lighting ceremony. The candle lighting ceremony provides the opportunity for the couple to get close to their guests during the reception. The phrase, “Both bride and groom are still immature in the society, so please help them out and lead them to the right direction” is the most famous speech from the guests of honor (Goldstein 1997, Edwards 1989). If a bride has a church ceremony, she usually only wears the white gown and the evening gown, neglecting the kimono.

At the end of the reception, the bride and groom present flower bouquets to both of their parents. Flower presentation, while wearing the evening gown, involves a combination of Japanese tradition and western culture. The flower presentation ceremony symbolizes the filial piety to their parents, the strongest Japanese ethic. The flower presentation demonstrates the strongest tie between parent and child (Edwards 1987:78). A typical Japanese custom is to understand others without words, or acts. Children and parents do not dare to say, “I love you” to each other, but in this case practice the flower presentation to demonstrate the child’s love for their parents.

Although the cake-cutting ceremony, candle lighting ceremony, and the flower presentation are three themes of the reception, all these are rarely incorporated together in



modern receptions. Instead, people typically only have the cake-cutting, or cake-cutting with another ceremony (Edwards, 1987, and Goldstein, 1997). For example, a wedding cake is a symbol rather than food to the Japanese people and wedding. The wedding cake that is used for the cake-cutting ceremony, is made of either wax or rubber, and is inedible<sup>4</sup>. The cake does not play the original role; moreover, many couples re-use the same wedding cake that is provided by the hotel or wedding hall. According to Goldstein, the inedible wedding cake is a Western element (1997:157).

However, it is not simply an adopted Western element, but rather a mutation of the western wedding cake. The original meaning of the Japanese wedding cake is multi-vocalic—as a food and as a material for a ritual and . The wedding cake has performed roles for a bride and groom. One example is to show men's domination over women. An old tradition not practiced any more is breaking a loaf of barley bread over a bride's head. The groom would eat part of the bread, and break the rest over the bride's head, symbolizing the groom's dominance over the bride (Continuum Internet Publishing Services Inc. 1998). The groom used the cake symbolically as a tool to warn the bride to obey him. In another example of food symbolism, Counihan discussed food rules among people in Sardinia, “*taboo*, the prohibitions and restrictions on the consumption of certain foods by certain people under certain conditions; and *symbolism*, the specific meanings attributed to foods in specific context” (1999:19-20).

Concepts toward the wedding cake of Japanese have changed from just a symbol to a literal food, and then come back to the symbol. In 1987 people used a tiered and inedible cake made of hard wax, or molded rubber for the cake-cutting. The big cake demonstrates Japanese

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<sup>4</sup> The price of inedible cake is basically the price of a desert cake. If the couple uses the inedible cake for the cake-cutting, the desert cake is free (Personal communication with the male employer of Meguro Gajoen, May 31, 2001).

concept toward the wedding reception as *hade* (ostentatious). In 1990's some Japanese began to replace the inedible cake with a single tier edible cake to be served to the guests. At that time, a bride and groom paid more attention to its taste instead of the function. Since the Japanese economy experienced a pinnacle at that time, the couple could also afford to have a fresh cake. In the middle of the 90's, varieties of cakes were used as a wedding cake, such as the rectangular cake with pictures of the bride and groom's company emblems, a cake with a heart shape, or the French cake, *Croque en Bouchée* that were not common in the 1980's. The couple used the cake in creative individual ways, a symbol or a game. One couple feed a piece of *bouchée* to each other, another couple hides a key inside of the cake and the person who gets the piece of cake with the key is said to be the next one to get married.

However, nowadays, the need for inedible cake is still higher than the edible one because of the cost (Personal communication with Samejima, May 31, 2001). In fact, people who had weddings or were planning weddings talked about the high price of edible cake as opposed to the cake-cutting: the edible cake is ¥900 (\$7) per person vs. the inedible cake ¥600 (\$5) per person (Personal communication with Kirayama, Nakahara, and Ogata, the office workers of the Airline card company, June 19, 2001).

#### **2.4. French Food and Japanese People**

Food is one of the major objects that appeal to the guests, and Japanese people especially favor French cuisine for the reception meal. In Japan, the reception used to be held at night as a traditional dinner given in announcement of one's marriage (Ema 1971). After the 1950's Japanese began to have a reception at hotels, and since the 1970's, the wedding industry has prospered (Samejima 2001). Presently, because of the convenience for guests and the wedding hall or hotel, a reception may be held at any time of day for an interval of two and a half hours,

and the food is served for an hour and a half. During this time, the newly wed couple gives a warm welcome to their guests with a nice meal. The French food served is haute cuisine, not like an everyday meal.

However, Japanese traditional wedding foods were not considered just as creating a nexus of people, or a society, but also as a symbol. The wedding reception foods are symbolic foods, which were brought into the home, or prepared by, neighbors of a newly wed couple, or neighbors of their parents in 1950's and 1960' (Edwards 1987). Mainly these dishes were several types of fish and other typical Japanese food, such as *sekihan* (red beans rice), *mochi* (rice cake), and sushi were prepared as celebration foods (Matsushita 1991).

The traditional ceremony foods have faded into the background for modern Japanese wedding reception meals, and French haute cuisine became favored for a wedding reception in the late 1980's and the early 1990's. Although Western foods differ from Japanese food in many ways, they were adapted into Japanese food culture easily because "People's culinary life in each country, region, local is rarely changed unless it receives the strong influences from the outside" (Muraoka 1984:119). French cuisine had strong influence on Japanese wedding reception menus, and became the staple reception food.

In conclusion, the Japanese wedding industry has grown, and has adopted Western weddings as its product. Since Japanese do not involve religion in weddings much, Westernized practices were accepted easily. Although the Japanese wedding is westernized, it maintains Japaneseness through time, space, participants, and some of wedding materials. Although the Japanese believe that the modern wedding is standard, it is a showy mini-drama.

Adopting the western wedding includes accepting the western reception and its cuisine, especially French cuisine. Western food and Japanese people have a long history together, and

they have created a mixed cuisine. Western food has long been served at restaurants, and in the 1970's, the Japanese begun to serve western food at wedding reception meals. Presently, the popular fares are haute cuisine, with either French or a combination of French and Japanese cuisine. Simultaneously, Japanese maintain the significance of Japanese food as a their daily food.

The wedding industry offers many reception meal choices for occasions when different aged people gather, like a wedding reception. A combination of a western wedding and traditional Japanese wedding and the growth of the wedding industry are important keys to look at the shift of wedding systems in Japan.

## CHAPTER 3. *SASHIMI*: NATURE AND CULTURE

*SASHIMI* (raw fish): An archetypal dish of raw food.

### 3.1. Rites of Separation and Rites of Passage

Culture is created based on nature, and humans cannot live without culture. Clifford Geertz stated that humans need the public aspect of culture to express their individual feelings and emotions (Geertz 1987:130).

Rituals are a part of culture that accompany humans through out their entire life. Birth may be a starting point and death may be an end point; we live toward death as if following a ritual line on drawn on paper. The line may be straight, curved, or a forming a circle, depending on cultural factors (Figure 3.1.1)

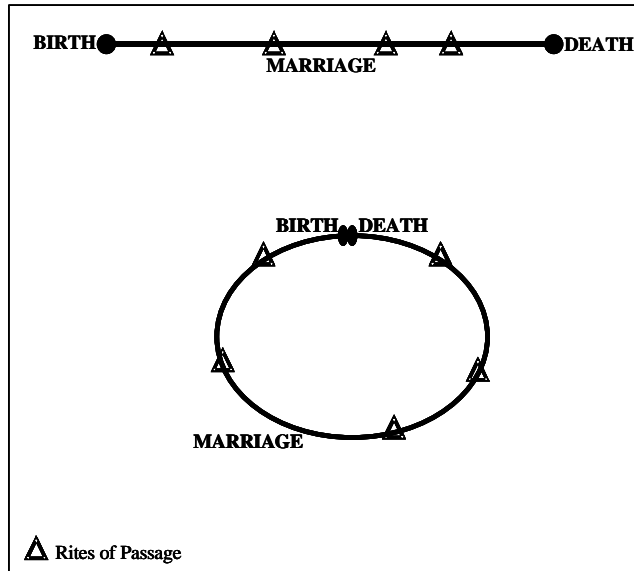


Figure 3.1.1. Life and Rituals

Rituals are located along the line; for example, marriage is located somewhere on the line (depending on culture) while death is located at or near the end of the line. The bride is dead. The traditional Japanese costumes for both a bride and a corpse are a white kimono. The bride's white kimono is originally modeled after from that of the dead. Although the bride and deceased are poles apart, both leave their families and move onto the next stage of life, partaking in a rite of separation. The bride and dead are crossed out from their family registers when a woman becomes a wife and a person passes away.

Both weddings and funerals have their own rituals, both of which have undergone changed through time. The wedding ceremony and reception are highly influenced by western culture, such as a church wedding, a white gown, and reception meal. Robert J. Smith

characterized the flexible nature of rituals: “they [existing social and symbolic orders] were made, unmade, remade, and transformed endlessly” (Smith 1997:28). He found that Japanese wedding and funeral rituals changed when they were passed on to the next generation, which resulted in rituals being “moving targets” (1997:35).

Modernization of life may appear to be a form without deep meanings; for example, as people have busy lives and rituals are remade to be adapted to people, some of the ritual steps may be omitted. The contemporary ritual is highly compressed in a single day: the rites of separation, transition, and incorporation. On the other hand, the traditional ritual takes more time and materials to move on the stages (Ema 1971:113-116; Suzuki 2000:91-92).

Though both rituals for weddings and funerals have changed, their form is different. One reason is that weddings are relatively free of religion and not actually a necessary ritual. On the other hand, funerals are closely tied with religion and are a necessary ritual in Japanese society (Personal communication with Nakayama of NW Hotel, June 17, 2001). Van Gennep also assessed that death was profoundly and wholly compared with other rites of passage, such as the wedding (Huntington and Metcalf 1979:29). Smith stated that as the Japanese rituals for death and marriage are changed and modernized:

for each successive senior generation in all societies, the pace at which the target moves will seem to accelerate, and its very shape to change as it passes out of our control and into the hands of younger members of society” (1997:35).

As a result, the contemporary and traditional rituals clash with each other.

Rituals are always practiced on the basis of knowledge, which may be held by the head of a society or an expert of a ritual industry such as a wedding director or a mortician. Although the family’s opinions are considered, social customs have priority in rituals (Shibata 1994:56). Japanese marriage is tied more to the celebration of a new stage of life than to religion; thus,

there are few ritual requirements for the Japanese wedding. The Japanese believe that marriage is not programmed when people are born, while death is. Consequently, one can plan or avoid marriage if s/he wishes; in short, marriage is not a necessity. However, once it is planned, the bride and groom are the main actors of the wedding, and they or their parents spend much time and money on the rituals, arranging the time, places, clothing, foods, and gifts.

Death among Japanese has high ritual priority (Suzuki 2000:98; Personal communication with Yamamoto of J-airline company; Horie, a school teacher). "These days family and relatives don't have time to see each other unless someone passes away or someone marries." Suzuki went on, "Even a wedding may not be considered an event significant enough for busy people to take a day off work, whereas a funeral is an appropriate reason to miss work" (Suzuki 2000:98). In fact, the Japanese are more likely to receive paid holidays for attending funerals than for attending weddings.

Businesses use the rituals to catch customers, such as a betrothed couple or a bereaved family. Advertisements for rituals are highly competitive, appearing on billboards, signs on subways, television, radio, the Internet, and in newspapers and magazines. Further, the wedding business offers frequent bridal fairs.

Zéksi:(2001), the wedding magazine, introduced 139 bridal fairs in the *Kanto* area (Tokyo and 6 neighbor prefectures) just for June and July 2001. The fairs are held mostly on the weekend, meanings that about 139 bridal fairs were held on nine weekends.

The bridal fair is an event held in a hotel, wedding reception hall, or restaurant several times a year. The bridal fair introduces new wedding plans, new dresses, and opportunities of holding a mock ceremony, trying dresses on, and food tasting. Some young couples visit the bridal fair as a date (2001:35).

This chapter will investigate rituals in modern Japanese society by observing processes of change and focusing on material cultures to think about Japanese consciousness toward the weddings. The material culture will help to understand what the wedding ceremony and reception are for Japanese. The funeral research focuses on the Buddhist religion, which is the oldest practiced religious funeral in Japan; it was first practiced in *Nara* period (710-793), and it spread deeply into Japanese society in the *Heian* period (794-1191) (Tamamuro 1979:105).

### **3.2. Liminality**

Van Gennep (1979) introduced the theory of social process: the first division created the two categories, and they include three steps. The first division of “death vs. marriage” creates two categories, which are “life/death vs. single/married,” and then moved to the three steps, “life- the last -death vs. single-engaged-married” (Huntington and Metcalf 1979:24-25). The three steps of Buddhism religion are distinctive: life-soul-Buddhahood. As one passes away, s/he becomes a soul for 49 days. The soul leaves the dead body, and stays at its birthplace, wandering between life and death. After 49 days, the soul becomes Buddhahood and leaves for the next world, which is equivalent to Van Gennep’s term ‘*l’ autre monde.*’ Buddhists believe in reincarnation; thus, when the Buddha is reborn as a human, s/he has a new life again, like a circle, and then on to another circle (Tamamura 1979).

The transition period exists for marriage as well; however, its time is not specific. After three to six months, the average length of a Japanese engagement, the couple will marry (Fujioka and Iida, 1985:53). As Benedict states, the Japanese are very careful and worried about social reputation, to break an engagement is a big deal for them. As mentioned in the introduction, marriage creates or involves family ties, so if one is engaged, her/his marriage is certainly planned which differs to the American engagement. The American engagement period



is longer compared to the Japanese engagement period; the Japanese do not engage until their marriage is certain. Although the Japanese engage to certainly marry, their status is still unmarried, by law. The stage of engagement is similar to the death stage, because the second stage, the soul is definitely not alive, but not in Buddhahood yet.

The word “death” is not used only for physical death in Rites of Passage, but also to describe ritual death, like that of a bride. Van Gennep discusses many societies in which a bride is considered dead during the period of engagement, or for the duration of the wedding ceremony. This is the case in Japanese society, as mentioned in Chapter 1; the bride is dead to her own family and reborn in her husband’s family.

Both the dead and the married need to be reported to public offices in Japan. Although one’s marriage is supposed to be registered, there is no specific deadline for this registration. It is up to each couple to register, which may take place before the wedding ceremony or after they come back from their honeymoon (Fujioka and Iida 1985:125-126, 134). The registration is a sort of passport for the conjoined life journey, in terms of marriage for a woman and man to live together in society.

Some married couples that are recognized socially do not register or send a note of marriage for years. Ogata, who works for the Airline card company and her husband, had a wedding ceremony and reception in 1992. They have lived together for over eight years, and their relatives and friends consider them to be married. Nonetheless, they have not yet registered their marriage with the public office. According to the couple, they did not want to belong to either family, as most Japanese do. In this case, the husband is the only son of his family, and was raised to take care of his parents. The wife is the oldest daughter in her family, and she does not want to leave her parents. Because of these reasons, at first their parents did

not agree with their marriage. The choice the couple made was to announce their marriage to their friends and relatives in order to convince their families (Personal communication with Ogata, June 19, 2001). Other couples mentioned that registration of their marriage would give them freedom to live with their partners (Personal communication with Horie, Maeno, Wakata, July 31, 2001). Parents do not like their children to live with their partner without the marriage registration.

Basically, a couple announces their marriage to others so that society sees them as a married couple. For Japanese, recognition from the society is important more than to swear to God, or sometimes even to register at the public office.

### **3.3 Color Culture: White, Black, and Thin Black**

Color culture is significant because people use color based on their culture; however the color spectrum is universal, symbolic associations of color are cultural. According to Victor Turner, the Ndembu's cultural ideology of the color white is a seamless fabric that symbolizes both life and death (Turner 1969:140). White symbolizes "clean, holy, and pure" (Ema 1971:223) and is also a color for both the living and the deceased for Japanese as well. In Japan, when one passes away, one's body is placed in a coffin and dressed in or covered with a white kimono by her/his bereaved family. The only color given to the dead body is white: a pair of white *tabi* (socks), a white triangle headband, and *zori* (sandals made of straw) with white strips. Instead of western dress, the kimono is the only uniform for the Japanese soul to travel to the next world, *l' autre monde*.

Upon her marriage, the bride is considered dead to her own family, and the white silk kimono or white gown that she wears symbolizes that death. One Japanese traditional wedding costume is the white silk kimono, *shiromuku*, that symbolizes 'white' (*shiro*) and 'pure' (*muku*),

and a white scarf, *wataboshi*, a name that is made from the words ‘cotton’ (*wata*) and ‘scarf’ (*boshi*) (Figure 3.3.1). Modern Japanese are not used to wearing kimonos. Partly because the kimono is so complicated to put on, another white gown, the western dress, has been adapted as the Japanese wedding costume, and the bride wears it instead of the kimono. The major difference between the kimono for the bride and the dead is placement of the seams when the kimono is worn: the right seam is on top of the left seam for the bride, and the opposite for the dead.

White wedding garments are related to gender in modern Japanese society. White is momentous for the bride because white signifies “the purity of the bride’s intention to fit into her husband’s family. Tradition dictates that the bride dressed in white is open in her heart to ‘be dyed,’ that is, to accept and learn the customs and ways of her husband’s household” (Yamanaka 1982:54). Later in the ceremony, the bride changes into a colorful kimono, or a dress, because the bride is considered to be reborn as the groom’s wife<sup>1</sup> (Figure 3.3.2 a, b). Changing her outfit symbolizes the movement to a new stage of the rite of passage, from single to married, or from a woman to a wife.

Simultaneously, this practice symbolizes man’s power over a woman, for grooms do not need to change their outfit for the purpose of being “reborn”<sup>2</sup>. In fact, between 1490 and 1600, both a bride and groom wore white kimonos and then changed into color kimonos. The bride’s colored kimono was a gift from the groom (Ema 1971:91), symbolizing man’s power over women.

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<sup>1</sup> During *Heian* period (794-1185) Japanese nobles used to have three-day-wedding ceremony and on 4<sup>th</sup> day, people were allowed to leave the ceremony. Changing outfits is originally meant that the couple could change their wedding costumes into others (Ema 1971:223).

<sup>2</sup> During *Muromachi* period (1490-1600) amongst Japanese nobles, both a bride and groom wore white kimono for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> days, and then on 3<sup>rd</sup> day they wore colored kimono (1971:91).



Figure 3.3.1 A bride in *Shiromuku* and a groom in kimono.



a.



b.

Figure 3.3.2: Reborn from White to Red.

A modern wedding kimono for the grooms is black, but usually they wear a swallowtail or a suit with any colors, such as black, white, gray, silver, or any color. Although men seem to have power, in fact, they do not have it any longer after women started to work. It is women who care and plan a wedding to make it as they want. Moreover, men's clothes with wide varieties of color, except white, bring the bride's white garment out. There are Japanese brides who do not change their white garments into other colors, perhaps because women may want to maintain themselves by not changing dresses. Brides change dresses from a white gown to colored dress to meet society's expectation of being a quiet and obedient woman. Japanese women gained power in society and power over food at 'dine out (needless to cook)' like a wedding reception meal at the same time, they still maintain power over food at home, such as to be in charge of purchasing, storing, and preparing meals (McIntosh and Zey 1998:130).

Japanese women believe that marriage changes not just their marital status, but their economic status, as well. Women are anxious to be reborn into a higher economic class than the one they participated in before marriage. For example, a Japanese woman compares her father's salary with her partner's salary, determining whether the partner can provide her with a better life than her father does (Yamada 1996). For women, to change from a white gown into a colored dress indicates a rise in her social and economic status.

Black is the color for other participants in the rituals. Funeral and wedding formal costumes for female participants in these ceremonies are five-crested black silk kimonos: *kuro-tomesode* (formal wear) with woven patterns or designs as a wedding kimono, and *mofuku* (a morning wear) without the pattern or design as a funeral one. *Kuro-tomesode* is a formal kimono for married women at a wedding, and usually a newlywed couple's families or relatives wear it as well. The kimono has a pattern or design with gold, white, red, and other colors

(Figure 3.3.3). The *mofuku* is worn with a black obi, baffle sash, obi cord, sandals, bag and *juzu* (Buddhist beads). Unlike the condolers, the wedding guests are allowed to wear accessories with bright colors, or gold, because the wedding is a celebration and can be '*hade* (ostentatious).'

Black is considered a formal color in Japanese society, and *mofuku* is the important kimono for a married woman. *Furisode* (long flowing sleeved kimono) is a formal kimono for a single woman (Yamanaka 1982:54) (Figure 3.3.4.a.b). However, female youth often wear western dresses instead of *furisode*. Although wedding guests used to avoid wearing a white dress because the white is the bride's color, modernization has recently changed their attitude, mentality, and wardrobe choices.

Japanese men have two types of formal costumes: the kimono and western suits. In the late 1990s, they rarely wear kimonos for any occasion, and they usually wear a black suit for both the funeral and the wedding. The use of ties changes, indicating a type of ritual a man attends: a black tie for the funeral and a white tie for the wedding. For example, there is a man with a white shirt and black pants, if he wears a black tie, he attends the funeral, if he wears a white tie, he goes to the wedding ceremony, or reception. Just like the female youth, male youth enjoy dressing and are allowed to wear formal dresses or pants suits for the wedding. Thus, even though they own a black formal suit, they may prefer to wear a regular suit of any color and a tie with patterns (Figure 3.3.5). White and black are the original colors of clothing for the bride, her family, its guests, the dead person, its bereaved family and guests.

Color culture and linguistic significance are prevalent in the wedding and reception. As guests arrive, they go to the front desks to give their gifts of money, and then write their names and address on reception notes. The money should be placed inside a certain type of envelope tied with red and white paper string, *mizuhiki* (water flow). Black and white string is





Figure 3.3.3: Parents of a bride. The mother is in *tomesode*.





Figure 3.3.4.a: *Furisode*.



Figure 3.3.4.b: *Furisode*.



Figure 3.3.5: Males are in suits with various ties.

used for death rituals. Although there are two shapes of *mizuhiki*, *cho-musubi* (bow knot)/*hana-musubi* (flower knot) is used for celebratory events except wedding and engagement money because other celebrations can be repeated. Another shape of *mizuhiki*, *musubi-kiri* (end knot), is used for the wedding, or engagement, signifying that this occasion is the first and the last and will never happen again. Besides the marriage rituals, they are used for hospital visits, and condolences. Visitors in these cases express their hope that the person will not be hospitalized again, that the bereaved family will never lose another family member, and that the newlyweds will not go on to marry others.

Not only is the color of envelopes symbolic but also the color and kind of ink used to write on the envelopes is symbolic, as expressed through its name. For weddings, the ink is dark, and *mizuhiki* colors are gold-silver, red-white, or gold-red. One of the salesclerks of Yotsuetsu Department store explained about the envelopes. As many youth attend the wedding, the department store prepared different colors of envelopes to meet their needs (Personal communication with the Yotsuetsu female salesclerk, June 28, 2001) (Figure 3.3.6).

The ink on the envelope is as significant as the tie for the male's black formal suit. Dark ink is used for any occasions, but for the wake, or the funeral, thin black ink is used. At a wedding reception in 1998, two girls were at the reception desk, and on the desk there were notes and pens for the guests to write down their name and address, and lacquer boxes for the money envelopes. A male guest, who was the bride's uncle, picked up one of the pens to sign. As soon as he started to write his name, he yelled at the girls, "This is the thin black ink! You should not have put it here. You should take it back now!" (Field notes May 1998). The thin black ink reminds participants of inauspicious events, because it is used just for condolence such as at the wake, or funeral.



Figure 3.3.6: Envelopes for celebrations.

The color of food is significant for Japanese rituals. Red symbolizes “love, joy, and pleasure” and is used as one of wedding colors (Ema 1971:223). *Manju*, the Japanese-style bun stuffed with *azuki*-bean (red-bean) paste is standard gift for many rituals. The color of *manju* has significance for wedding and funeral rituals. *Manju* for funerals or Buddhist services are white, green, or brown. On the other hand, wedding *manju* are either white, or red (rather pink) in color. Very often, a white and green *manju* is served for a celebration ritual, but a red one is never served for a funeral. Red, which actually looks pink rather than the red color term that describes it, exclusively indicates celebration and happiness. *Sekihan*, red-bean rice is the most representative celebration food. However, its demand for wedding meals has diminished, and it is rarely served at a wedding in Tokyo (Personal communication with Nakayama, the salesclerk of Tamagawaya, June 16, 2001).

Japanese use colors as a symbol to represent different types of ritual. White and black are distinctive in Japanese rituals. The relationship between ritual and color is similar to that of language and color terms. If Japanese funeral is in “Stage I in the evolution of lexical color categories”, the Japanese wedding is in the higher Stage, which supplies plenty of colors rather than just white and black: funeral (white and black) < wedding (white, black, red...) (Berlin and Kay 1969:17-23).

### **3.4. Taboos in Weddings**

Rituals usually have prescribed ways of being performed. Violations of proper ritual constitute taboos. Ritual taboos include language use, food, money, and material taboos. The Japanese wedding has a wide permissible range of adopting western aspects and altering wedding ritual into new forms. Although the forms for funerals have also changed, many

taboos are maintained, such as prohibition against wearing gold, or using red or gold color for the funeral.

Taboos can be diminished by circumstances, such as time, or place. Wedding language is one of the common taboos. There is no jargon for the wedding, but some words should be kept out. Emcees who direct the wedding reception are careful to avoid certain words like “*modoru* (return to a start)”, “*wakeru* (divide, provide, share)”, and “*kiru* (cut).” For example, after guests’ performance, the emcee says, “Please have a seat” instead of “Please return to your seat” which gives an expression of returning to a status of unmarried. In order to avoid *wakeru*, the emcees say, “Please take food” instead of “Please share food.” ‘Cut’ is not used for the wedding which indicates to separate the new couple, thus cake cutting is addressed ‘*keiki nyuutou* (cake knife-insertion)’ (Personal communication with Onda, a free emcee, July 29, 2001).

Food and taboos are a common aspect of weddings. Chopsticks are the traditional tableware for Japanese people, and restaurants provide disposable wooden chopsticks for any cuisine. There are two types of chopsticks, and the common pair is called *wari-bashi* (half-split chopsticks). They have a slit and an opening, so that they can be split into two sticks easily. *Wari-bashi* chopsticks are taboos at wedding meals because the word, *waru* (to split) also indicates the couple’s separation. Rather, *maru-bashi* (round chopsticks) that are already separated into two, are used because guests do not need to split the chopsticks.

Green tea, the favorite Japanese tea, is never served at a wedding for the following reasons: “*cha-cha o ireru* (disturbance).” Ohtsuka, an eighty-two years old farmer explained, “New buds of tea should be picked up as soon as they are sprouted. I think because a bride should not be picked up from her husband family” (Personal communication with Ohtsuka, June

19, 2001). One of the salesclerks of the teashop in Yotsuetsu department, the department of long standing, mentioned another explanation for the green tea taboo: the tea leaves make the clear water get cloudy. Cloudy appearance is not suitable for celebrations, such as an engagement ritual, or wedding. Instead of green tea, therefore, *sakura-yu* (cherry blossom tea), clear water with pink cherry blossom petals, or *kobu-cha* (seaweed tea) are served for the engagement ritual, or wedding (Personal communication with the salesclerk of Yotsuetsu Department, July 21, 2001).

However, the tea taboo is regional, and tea is served as a wedding beverage in some regions in Japan. Yoichiro Nakamura, the author of *Cha-no Minzoku-gaku (Ethnology of Tea)* introduced the presence of tea for the engagement and wedding. Tea leaves at betrothals, are not supposed to be good quality, but should be cheap. People who live in Kyushu (the southern region in Japan) have a proverb about the leaves; rich tea leaves easily “*ocha-o dasu* (produce a cup of tea)”, while the inexpensive one take a longer time to do so. The word ‘*dasu*’ also has the same meaning as ‘get out’, in short, just as tea comes out easily from the rich tea leaves, so a bride will be got out from her husband’s family.

A newlywed couple’s friends and relatives present house supplies, such as tableware, laundry machines, TV, furniture, etc. to the couple as wedding gifts. Besides the gifts, guests at a wedding reception present a gift of money to the couple. Money taboos are inverted at the wedding ritual. New bills are not supposed to be given as a wedding gift because edges of the bills are sharp and might cut one’s fingers. As mentioned above ‘cut’ is also a taboo word in the wedding context (Personal communication with Ohta, 1992). Also, even number bills used to be taboo for a similar reason; even numbers are divisible, which could lead to the couple’s separation. Presently, it is considered to be polite to give new bills, and most Japanese have



stopped caring about even whether the bills are of number denominations. If guests have only two choices, ¥20,000, or ¥30,000 (\$160, or \$240)<sup>3</sup> for a wedding of someone whom they do not know well, they bring a smaller amount of money (Personal communication with Samejima, July 25, 2001). Nonetheless, according to Kirayama and Nakahara, commonly people whose age are in 20's give ¥30,000 as a wedding gift.

### **3.5. Consumption in Japanese Material Culture**

Japanese social competition occurs not through their income, but their consumption. Japanese consumption serves to maintain social status and the gift economy (Personal communication with John Clammer, August 2, 2001). Reciprocity is also an important component of Japanese culture: "The prevalence of gift-giving in Japan is well known" (Befu 1968:445). If one is invited to dinner, or even teatime, s/he brings something such as wine, fruits, or sweets. If the person gives a souvenir to another, next time, the given person returns one of approximately the same value. Further, "They [the Japanese] have added new practices or at least elaborated on existing customs and made them popular" (1968:452).

Gift giving is one of the important rituals at the wedding reception as well. Couples give gifts to their guests in an appreciation for their attendance and also a part of the reciprocity value. Japanese society appreciates the economic system of balanced reciprocity; giving and returning are balanced (Befu 1968:450; Ferraro 2001:169). Hendry, who studied gifts amongst Japanese, also assessed that Japanese gave a gift as a sort of token return and after one received a gift like Marcel Mauss' three obligations to represent of humans' relationship: give-receive-repay. Gifts exchange, such as food, or flowers occur between even friends and neighbors, moreover, the monetary value of the gifts measure an intimacy between people (Hendry 1997:210-226).

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<sup>3</sup> \$1= ¥125 (CITI BANK, June 2001)

However, among any gifts, food is considered the traditional type of gift and the most popular type of gift in Japan (1968:448). In Japanese weddings, guests are given nice meal and gifts from a newlywed couple as returning gifts because the guests give to the newlywed couple house supplies (which are not handed to the couple on wedding day) and bring money to a ceremony or a reception.

Wedding gifts to the guests are various, and a bride and groom are serious about selecting the gifts because the gifts show their fashion sense. The gifts include both wares and foods, and a fragile item, such as a clock, is the most popular sort of gift. Before, or during the wedding reception, the gift is placed under the guest's chair by a waitress/waiter, and the guest takes it when the reception is over (Figure 3.5.1). Concerning the guests, the catalogue gift has been popular, so that the guests can carry away a light gift bag, with the catalogue in it, and they will have choices of gifts. Befu made an ironic statement that if the guests found given gifts would have no conceivable use, the gifts would be passed on as returning to another (Befu 1968:451). Therefore, the catalogue gift is a decent gift to meet the guests' favors. The catalogue is wrapped nicely, and the guests can order gifts from it; the gifts are delivered to the house directly. The price of the items does not appear in the catalogue, but all the items fall within a price that the couple has chosen (Field note, June 9, 2001).

Japanese identity is largely marked by material objects (Personal communication with Clammer, August 2, 2001). Luxurious gifts are not passed on to others easily, and during recent years, Tiffany & Co. products have gained favor as the gift to wedding guests. The average price of the gift per person is ¥4,000 ~ ¥5,000 (\$32 ~ \$40), and the range of Tiffany gifts is between ¥4,000 ~ ¥7,500 (\$32 ~ \$60). Although the prices are reasonable, the name "Tiffany" raises the value of the gifts, and shows the couple's good taste. In order to keep their gift budget



Figure 3.5.1: Gifts for guests.

lower, the couple may choose to omit the more traditional food or gift. Only luxurious ceramics or glasses are maintained. In addition to Tiffany wine glasses, the Nakahara couple handed guests a small bottle of wine when the guests left the reception (Personal communication with Kirayama and Nakahara, June 19, 2001).

Not only foreign-owned companies, but also Japanese-owned companies provide luxurious gifts. Tiffany & Co. prepares eight products, five different designed cups and saucers, wine glasses, beer glasses, and whisky glasses. Because Japan is a good market for Tiffany & Co., The Japan Inc. created the eight products after receiving the design authority from the New York Company. Therefore, the products are Japanese originals. The Tiffany gifts please the wedding guests because the wedding gifts they design for the Japanese market are interesting and various (Personal communication with Ando of the customer service of Tiffany & Co. Japan Inc., June 28, 2001).

*Aniversaire*, the store and party hall for ‘anniversary’ was established in November 1998, and was located in the district where trend-conscious people gather. The owner of the store is the same person who owns a famous casual men’s wear shop in Japan. He focuses on gifts and ceremonies for rites of passage, from birth to death. The main target of *Aniversaire* is the wedding business, for which they offer such items as French products, goods, accessories, foods, sweets, and gifts. The wedding and party planner of the store, Kojima, mentioned three major products: Champagne, Chocolate, and Flowers. In France, a man brings all three when he proposes to his woman. While this custom has not been adopted by Japanese for engagements, customers do purchases these products as White Day<sup>4</sup> gifts. Champagne and glasses are

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<sup>4</sup> White Day is similar to Valentine’s Day in the U.S. Japanese Valentine’s Day is a day for a woman to give chocolate to her favorite man. The Valentine’s Day gifts became a social obligation, and female colleagues give chocolate to male colleagues. As an appreciation, the

standard wedding gifts purchased at *Aniversaire* for the guests. Although they are not luxurious gifts like Tiffany & Co., the couple demonstrates their uniqueness with the reasonable price. *Aniversaire* completely ignores Japaneseness, and brings French aspects into a Japanese wedding (Personal communication with Kojima, May 31, July 20, 2001, Field note May 31, 2001).

Other traditional gifts are combinations of wares and foods. If one purchases gifts at stores which do not correspond to the wedding hall or parlor where the reception takes place, the couple will be charged *mochikomi-ryo* (penalty fee) approximately ¥500 (\$4) per a gift. For example, when Nakahara bought Tiffany products for the guests, the hotel where Nakahara had the ceremony and reception gave the notification of *mochikomi-ryo*. Competition is strong, and wedding halls and hotels, prefer that the wedding gifts come from their correspondent companies. Meguro Gajoen, the major reception hall in Tokyo for 10 years, offers a wide variety of gifts, and several booklets just for them: kitchen utensils, dining, living goods with western, eastern designs. Some of the gifts and foods are displayed in the room for the bridal fair (Field note June 9, 2001).

The gift foods are nicely wrapped with white, red, or gold patterned paper and ribbons. Sometimes, they are packed in a lacquer box. The food items symbolize happiness, thus they are the same foods as the engagement gifts like dried bonito, or *sekihan* (red beans rice). Besides, the hall sells assorted meats, Japanese sweets, Western sweets, and Chinese sweets (Figure 3.5.2.a~g). The standard western sweets are *dragee*, the Italian sugared almonds and *Baum Kuhen* the German cake. The almond has sprouts until the edge of twigs, which indicates 'family prosperity.' *Baum Kuhen* is a rolled, baked cake; when cut, the pieces resemble annual rings of tree, and Japanese believe that making the rings indicates the family prosperity.

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male colleagues return candies, or underwear to the female.



Figure 3.5.2.a: Food Gifts. (Figure Continued)



b (Figure Continued)





c (Figure Continued)





d (Figure Continued)



e (Figure Continued)



f (Figure Continued)



g

Originally, Gajoen started its business as a Chinese restaurant, and then changed into a reception hall, therefore, it supplies *Geppei*, the Chinese sweet for celebrations as well (Personal communication with Kawanabe of Meguro Gajoen, June 9, 2001).

Japanese consumption behavior toward weddings is very insistent, and thus the wedding business competition is active, with competition among the halls, hotels, and restaurants. A lot of wedding magazines that target young women planning weddings are published as well. Wedding advertisements are displayed not only in these magazines, but also in newspaper, television, radio, trains, and advertisements at the department stores, restaurants, and hotels. The approximate prices of a ceremony and reception, and bridal fairs are listed on the advertisements. As the customers find suitable places, they go there to get more specific price and features of rental dresses, flowers, gifts, pictures, and wedding cakes. Further, the bridal fairs provide plenty of opportunity such as wearing costumes, the rehearsal wedding ceremony and reception, and reception meal with reasonable price.

The wedding is carefully planned. If a couple is serious about their relationship, before they are officially engaged, they reserve a place approximately 6 months or a year before their wedding. A deposit is required (Personal communication with Kawanabe, Samejima, and wedding pamphlets). Once a couple decides the place and date for the wedding, they begin the preparation, which goes on right up until the day of wedding. Generally speaking, they take suggestions from the wedding hall, or hotel for what to serve at their ceremony and/or meal, but they are just references and alternatives are still available. Three to six months before the wedding, the following preparations should be complete: official engagement, the list of invited guests, the honeymoon plans, reporting to the couple's bosses about the wedding. Two to three months before, wedding rings are ordered, and an emcee is requested. Also around this time,

the bride and groom should settle meetings with the emcee, mailing and returning invitations, and ordering gifts for the guests (Fujioka and Iida, 1985:66-67)

The newlywed couple and its families need to determine the number of guests in order to find a place and prepare meals. An invitation card is necessary to be able to attend a wedding. The invitation is sent to guests two months before, and the guests should return it back to fathers of the newlywed couple, a month before the wedding. The invitation card provides the date and time of the ceremony and reception, and a detailed map to help the guests to find the place without difficulties; it also acts as the announcement for the ritual (Figure 3.5.3).

Food is associated with occasions when people gather. At the wedding reception, meals are important ritual events, thus the bridal party entertains its guests with high quality food (Wood 1995:81). Some guests attend the wedding with great expectations toward the meal because they might give couple of hundred dollars as a gift. Especially if the guest is not familiar with a bride and groom, her or his greatest pleasure at the event is the meal at the reception. The celebration is hedonism, and while people enjoy the ritual, the meal plays the crucial role at the reception for the participants.

### 3.6. Symbolism: Letter and Cake



Figure 3.6.1: A *kanji* character for “*kotobuki*”.

A bride and groom are symbols of a wedding, and there are many other symbols associated with the wedding. For example, a letter, “*kotobuki*” (see Figure 3.6.1) which means celebration, appears at any celebrated event,

or upon materials associated with the celebration, like the money envelope, the gift bag, a welcome board, a chopstick case, and an invitation. The letter is very often written with red ink, and it indicates celebrations. However, it is strictly a Japanese tradition, and rarely appears at a church wedding.





A menu for the wedding reception meal illustrates the relationship between language and food. The language designates the types of food at the reception. For example, a couple that held their wedding reception meal in 1994 at a French restaurant in Tokyo presented the menu written in both French and Japanese languages.

The guests were all Japanese who were not familiar with French language, and neither was the married couple. For the guests, the French part of the menu was just a symbol of French cuisine instead of a table of contents of the meal. In fact, the French menu just names the dish, while Japanese menus give detailed explanations of the food. Furthermore, sometimes French menus and Japanese menus for the same meal do not match. For example, the French menu states the genre of the food like '*soupe de jour*' and the following Japanese translation is 'organic vegetable soup.' The French menu tells nothing about an oyster [scallop], but Japanese menu does: '*Frivolité de Saumon fumé au caviar*' is followed by 'smoked salmon with scallop tartar sauce and caviar.' Obviously, the French menu was part of the entertainments.

Even when the menu is written only in Japanese, the form of the menu is written from left to right like English text instead of in the Japanese top to bottom orientation because the menu looks fancy to Japanese if it follows Western written form.

A wedding cake is a new sort of symbol in Japan, and it diffused into the Japanese wedding reception in the 1970's. The wedding cake was inedible, and made by either *pastillage* (wax cake) or rubber and only a small part of it is made of cream in order to insert the knife. In 1980's, the gigantic inedible cake, such as the cake with a couple of tiers was favored in order to show the bridal family's economic power. In 1990's, people tended to have an edible one-layer cake. The cake was considered both as a symbol, and also as food. Japanese adaptation of the wedding cake brought both the inedible and edible cake into the reception.

### 3.7. Conclusion

Humans create symbols and rituals images in order to live in the world and organize their life. Fujioka and Iida stated that rituals were rules to maintain our social life, and they give knowledge, which has been passed down from the past; however, ritual is not just old, it is also a lubricant to smooth interactions in humans' daily life (1985:1-2). Therefore, the rituals are made, or remade differently in each society. Even within the same society, the rituals are often distinguished one from another: the rite of separation vs. the rite of passage.

A Japanese bride is ritually overlapped by the dead from the perspective of the family. The ritual transition stages for both are similar and both have three stages. For Japanese women, marriage is simultaneously a rite of separation and a rite of passage.

Religion works as an intermediary between life and death. Funerals seem to have a power for restriction against change and people's acting to modernize the customs; for example, there continues to be limitation of using colors other than black and white for the funeral rituals.

Unlike death rituals, the Japanese wedding is relatively independent of religion, it depends more on society. Because of a marriage, new people are involved in the couple's life, and the couple's interaction with society is transformed. Therefore, while religious ceremony can be omitted from a wedding, and the official marriage register is treated less seriously, the reception is obligatory as a social practice. The importance of the wedding reception is to announce the marriage to relatives, friends, colleagues, and the society.

Although weddings maintain taboos, and customs, they are diminished, remade, or changed. Customs from other culture are adapted in an eclectic fashion into the Japanese wedding, and consequently, the wedding reception becomes a showy event, with the bride changing costumes throughout. Also the event ties strongly with Japanese consumption

behavior, in that the wedding identity is largely marked by objects, such as the expensive meal and gifts. Further, the wedding industry has been firmly established and it increasingly affects the wedding reception, through advertisements and bridal fairs. The concept of the Japanese wedding and its social consumption sometimes results in a gaudy wedding reception.



## **CHAPTER 4. *LE POISSON*: PATTERNS OF JAPANESE CULTURE, PATTERNS OF JAPANESE WEDDING**

*LE POISSON* (fish): A main dish from oceans.

### **4.1. Patterns of Modern Japanese Weddings**

This chapter introduces patterns of Japanese weddings, and how they have been remodeled. The reception is the core of the wedding, and the actual ceremony is an *hors d'oeuvre* for the reception. A second style developed, expanding the social importance of the reception: ceremony, followed by reception 1, then reception 2. Reception 1 involves serving a formal meal to invited guests, such as the couple's relatives, supervisors, friends and parents' acquaintances. Reception 2 takes the form of a buffet party at a restaurant, solely for the couple's friends. More recently the new reception, or casual party reception, is an innovation merging the two parties. For the new reception, guests are not required to bring large sums of money, as they are at a formal reception. Instead, guests pay the party fee, approximately ¥8,000 (\$64) for a female guest and ¥10,000 (\$80) for a male guest at the entrance (Interview with Kawanabe, June 9, 2001, Samejima, May 30, 2001, Wedding party at *Le Café Bleu*, June 3, 2001).

Three popular types of wedding ceremonies amongst contemporary Japanese are Shinto, Christian, and *Jinzen* (people's presence) wedding. *Jinzen* ceremony is suitable for Japanese who care about admission into society rather than religious blessing. The ceremonies take about 20, or 30 minutes. For the Shinto ceremony, only parents, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles are invited. Immediately before, or occasionally during the ceremony, the bride's relatives are introduced to those of the groom. Both families meet their future relatives at this time. Everyone is allowed to attend the Christian ceremony, and some attend the reception. The *Jinzen* ceremony is usually practiced as a part of the reception.

The reception is like a mini-drama, or show, and usually lasts two or two and a half hours. The “drama” takes place in 3 acts. An emcee conducts the entire reception, but s/he is not necessary a professional. Often the emcee is a friend of the bride or the groom, with a penchant for public speaking. However, the emcee is occasionally a professional.

The chef is another director of the party. While the emcee works on the stage, the chef works back-stage offering meals to the guests. In fact, the chef’s job is to present the meal to all participants excepting his staff.

#### **4.1.1. Reception Act I**

After the religious ceremony, professional photographers take formal group portraits (see Figure 3.3.2 a). Next the couple and their parents stand in a receiving line with a gilded folding screen behind them, greeting guests individually at the entrance to the reception room (see Figure 4.1.1). For guests unfamiliar with the couple’s parents, the bride or groom introduces each by name and relationship to their parents, in order that the parents can greet each guest sincerely.

There are several oval tables in the wedding reception room, each named with auspicious Japanese words. Name cards are placed at the table settings, so that the guests can find their seats easily (see Figure 4.1.2. a. b). The tables for the couple’s family are those farthest from the couple, because they are not the main guests of the party. The gifts for the guests are already placed next to each chair (see Figure 3.5.2). After the guests are seated at their tables, the entrance door is closed, and later opened for the bride and groom to enter. The couple sometimes enters with the same costumes they wore for the ceremony, or they may have changed into another. For example, the bride may wear *shiromuku* for the ceremony and greeting of the guests, and then change into *irouchikake* (colorful kimono) (Video Tape February 7, 1999).



Figure 4.1.1: A bridal party in front of a gilded screen.



Figure 4.1.2.a: A table with an auspicious Japanese word.



Figure 4.1.2.b: A name card for a guest.

Both bride and a groom rarely purchase the kimonos or dresses, but typically rent them from the rental dress stores, hotels, or halls. Renting a wedding costume is a remnant of an older tradition. Before the growth of Japanese economy beginning around 1955, Japanese common people could not afford to buy a wedding costume. Some of the rich families lent their luxurious kimonos to the commoners for wedding kimonos. This is considered the origin of the rental dress business in Japan (Interview with Samejima, May 31, 2001).

Because the bride and groom are placed at the center of the event, their table is set to face the guests, and sometimes on a platform with decorations of real or fake flowers, the wedding cake placed next to the table. A folding screen placed behind the couple adds to their visual emphasis, from the perspective of the guests.

After everyone is seated, the emcee, or go-between, introduces the bride and groom in great detail, including, for example, their parents' names, occupations, and the couple's education and occupations. Guests of honor deliver congratulatory addresses, such as words, or songs, addressing the groom's family name first and the bride's first name; for example with American names, "Mr. Smith and Kelly, congratulations." The couple is thought to be polite if they stand during the speech.

The emcee presses a course of action on the couple, and they move to the cake for the cutting ritual. This is one of the major photo opportunities for the guests because it is the only time when the three wedding objects are together: the bride, the groom, and the cake. The emcee encourages the guests to take pictures of the objects. The couple pauses for the guests to take pictures. Charsley, the author of Interpretation and Custom (1987) studied the wedding cake in Scotland, additionally indicating the symbolic trinity of bride, groom and cake:

The bride and groom leave the table and go to the cake. The guests are told, if they'd like to take some photographs [of the bride and groom's cutting] they can- usually five or six do (Charsley 1987:100).

After everyone, including the couple returns from the cake to their tables, another guest of honor, who is often the groom's supervisor at his job, gives a speech for the toast. Finally, the meal is served, and usually lasting for an hour and a half or even more until the end of Act II. Meanwhile, the couple leaves to change their costumes; for example, the bride changes from the kimono into a white gown, or an evening dress. The groom also changes his swallowtail into another, although there is little variation in the groom's costumes.

#### **4.1.2. Reception Act II**

While the guests enjoy the meal, the bride and groom reenter the room with a candlestick for the candle lighting ceremony. A tall candle is placed on the center of each table for the ceremony and as a decoration. The couple circumambulates the room to light the candle at the table and to personally thank the guests. Although the couple and the guests are close at the beginning and at the end of the reception, during the reception, this is only the opportunity for the couple and guests to be close each other. It is also another photo chance besides cake-cutting ceremony when the guests keep distance from the couple to take a whole picture of the couple and the cake. More recently, other rituals have developed to take the place of the candle lighting ceremony: a newer custom like handing a small gift to the guests, or mixing a chemical liquid in the glass placed on each table, such that it starts to emit light like a postmodern candle (Interview with Kawanabe, June 9, 2001).

During the meal, the couple, or the guests present informal entertainment. The couple shows pictures from their childhood on a big screen, and the emcee reads scripts written by the couple. The couple's middle school, high school teachers, university professors, supervisors,

school friends, and colleagues may present words, song, and performances in the front to both the couple and the guests. Usually, the couple has no time to enjoy a meal because they are obliged to pay attention to each speech and performance. Meanwhile, guests enjoy the meal.

#### **4.1.3 Reception Act III**

When the meal is over, it is time for the final ceremony: presenting the flower bouquets from the couple to their parents. The bouquets may be made with any cut flowers; there are no rules except that chrysanthemums are taboo, as they are dedicated to the dead at cemeteries, or domestic altars. The couple's parents stand in front of a screen that is at the end of the room. The couple walks from the table toward their parents. The bride gives bouquets to the groom's parents and the groom gives bouquets to the bride's parents. The bouquets symbolize a sort of reciprocity between parents, children, and future grandchildren. The newlywed couple offers appreciation to their parents' strong and eternal love by presenting the bouquets. Since returning the love that the parents gave to their children is assumed impossible, the couple swears to their parents to redistribute the love to the couples' future children. Either the emcee, or the bride reads an acknowledgement letter written by the bride to her parents in order to articulate her appreciation for raising her. It is at their point that the bride leaves her own family to become part of her husband's family; the bride is no longer considered as her own parents' daughter. Then, the groom's father gives a speech of appreciation to the guests, and asks their help for the new couple's life.

The emcee announces that the couple and their parents will leave the room to see off their guests at the door with the screen behind. When the couple leaves, it is the cue for the end of the party, and the guests should leave, even if they may not yet have finished the last dish. The

guests take with them the gift that was placed at the chair. They bow and congratulate the couple and their parents at the door.

This is the current and typical Japanese wedding pattern, standardized by business practices of the wedding industry, especially wedding reception halls, or hotels. The industry has been ingenious in providing services to gain bridal customers. Japanese couples refer to both domestic and international wedding magazines for ideas about their planned wedding, and may attend bridal fairs. The pattern above is still the pillar of the Japanese wedding.

Below I describe in detail two weddings I attended in Tokyo in the summer of 2001. At this time, the Japanese economy was stagnant, which affected individuals' attitudes toward consumption. Both families followed the general model outlined above. However each couple decided independently to relinquish some materials, or activities, such as the candle lighting ceremony, the bride's letter, or the presentation of flowers. Both weddings had a relatively small number of invited guests, and the reception meals were combinations of Japanese, Western (French), Chinese cuisines, while chopsticks were set on the table as if a substitute for silverware. The receptions began at 12:30 pm (typically lunchtime), although a full course dinner meal was served.

#### **4.2. Two Weddings: Oda family (groom) and Yokomori families (bride) vs. Togashi (groom) and Moro (bride) families**

The Oda-Yokomori families chose the *jinsen* ceremony to be included as a part of the reception, while the Togashi-Moro families chose to hold a Shinto ceremony before the reception. Because of the Shinto ceremony, the bride of Togashi-Moro wore *shiromuku* instead of a white gown. Neither couple included a candle lighting service, and both couples handed a small gift to each guest as they circulated among them during the meal.



#### 4.2.1. “Morning Sun” Drama

On July 1, 2001, *senbu* of Buddhist calendar when afternoon and night is regarded as a good time to have a celebration, fifty people were invited to the Oda-Yokomori wedding reception at 39F Sky Hall, a party hall located 125m above the ground and inside of the World Trade Center Building in Tokyo. The same day, seven couples had weddings at Sky Hall, and fourteen family names were listed on a bulletin board at the front of the hall.

Usually guests arrive 15~30 minutes before a ceremony or a reception. The guests of the couple were guided to a waiting room, and at 11:00am the staff came to take the relatives to another room to meet each other and make introductions. In the small introduction room, the family was served a cup of *sakura-yu* (cherry blossom tea). Forty minutes afterwards, the newlywed couple, their parents and relatives moved into the photo studio. After pictures were taken, the bridal party moved to another room to relax until the reception began. The room had large windows and scenic views, as the Tokyo Tower could be seen from the window. Five types of alcohol, orange juice, and Chinese tea were available to the guests there, although no green tea.

At the entrance of the reception room, a reception desk was placed, and one woman and three men who were the couple’s friends took care of guests and their gifts. The guests stopped there to tell which family’s guests they were, and handed over money gifts inside envelopes, while writing their names and addresses on the reception notes so the couple would be sure who came to the wedding, and who gave gifts without attending. If one receives an invitation letter and cannot attend the party, s/he asks others to bring the money for her/him.

The reception was scheduled to begin at 12:30pm. At that time, the guests were invited by the hall staff to move to the reception room, “Orion.” The room was decorated exclusively in

white and blue, which was part of a wedding package the couple had chosen, called “Morning Sun.” The image/concept of the plan was a fresh morning and a blue sky, ocean, and happiness (see Figure 4.2.1). At 12:25pm, the people at the desk wrapped up the money and notes, and then moved to “Orion.” The door was closed after all the guests entered. Behind the door, the staff gave instructions to the bride and groom on how to enter the room (see Figure 4.2.2). The bride wore a white gown, and the groom was in a dark blue swallowtail.

The couple entered the room to background music of the song, “Fly me to the moon.” All the music was taped by the couple, and handed over to the staff days before the wedding. The guests remained seated, and applauded the couple until they reached their rectangular table. Seven oval tables were labeled A to G, and located in front of the couple's table. Plates, blue napkins, silver-wear, chopsticks, glasses, ashtrays, and a name card behind each plate were set on the table. Nine staff members were inside of the room, and two staff members were outside of the room to take care of the party.

The emcee introduced the couple's backgrounds, and then moved on to the ceremony. The couple practiced a *Jinzen* wedding: with guests’ watching, they exchanged rings and signed the marriage certificates that were provided by the hall. No signatures of witnesses were needed, because the certificates were not official. The couple was to register their marriage at a public office two days after the wedding reception.

After the groom's and bride’s supervisors delivered congratulatory addresses to the couple, the couple moved to a small table located in the corner of the room. On the table was a three-tier cake with white colored drapes, made of cream cheese and fresh cream with white chocolate, named “the frill.” While standing at the table, the couple held a knife with a white bow to be used for the cake-cutting ritual. Later, the staff explained that the cake design was an



Figure 4.2.1: “Morning Sun”



Figure 4.2.2: A bride, groom, and a staff behind the door.



image of the fresh morning, and was designed to match the atmosphere of the room. The staff then gave the couple the sign to insert the knife into the cake. The emcee announced to the guests permission to come close to the couple, and the couple paused for the guests to take photos. Several guests with cameras ran toward the three objects, the bride, groom and the cake (see Figure 4.2.3).

Everyone then returned to their tables, and the guest of honor was invited to come to the front and give a toast. The guest delivered a speech, and then said, "*Kanpai* (cheers).” Immediately, the thick curtains on the windows (to the outside) were opened, and then the staff (three women and five men) uncorked bottles of champagne. While the couple's parents visited each table to fill guests' glasses, the couple left for 50 minutes to change their costumes and to take more photos. Then, the staff began serving a meal.

Act II began with the couples' reentry. The bride was in a pink cocktail dress with flower accessories around her neck, wrist and hair (see Figure 4.2.4). She had a basket, which was full of hand made cookies. The groom wore the same swallowtail as before, and they stood behind the door. The staff revised the couple's position into the middle of the door and gave them instructions on how to walk around each table, and distribute the cookies. The couple reentered the room, stopping at each table to give bags of cookies to the guests, instead of lighting a candle. The couple personally thanked each guest, and returned to their table, which was crowded with dishes. In fact, the couple did not have an opportunity to consume their meal because of their constant activity.

The bride's cousin's daughter handed a bouquet to the bride, and she gave a gift to the girl. Several of the couple's friends delivered speeches, and then the curtains were closed. Accompanied by *karaoke*, the bride's brother sang "True Love," a popular Japanese love song,



Figure 4.2.3: A bride, groom, and a wedding cake.



Figure 4.2.4: A bride in a pink dress and a groom in the same swallowtail.

and dedicated it to the couple. The curtains were reopened, and a rectangular table was placed in front of the couple for the groom's sisters and cousins to play bells--"Country Road" and "A Rouge Message." There did not seem to be any particular reason for playing the music other than entertainment for the guests.

At the end of the reception, the bridal party lined up to deliver acknowledgements to the guests. Following, they moved out the room to see off each guest personally. The party was over, and the guests left with the gifts. At 3:00p.m. the guests said, "congratulations" to the couple and the parents at the exit.

The guests left for the dressing room to change from their kimonos, or formal dress into casual dress. As kimonos are typically uncomfortable for many modern Japanese women, some female guests who plan to attend a wedding with the kimonos wear casual dress to a wedding hall, and then change upon arrival. Each guest departed carrying a gift bag that contained two large boxes. These boxes held five Japanese teacups and French sweets: Bon Cinque's cheesecake and Cadeux Cordial's *mille-feuille*. The couple visited several department stores searching for gifts and were willing to pay the reception hall's penalty fee per gift. Still, they found nothing suitable among the department store offering. Eventually, they bought gifts from the wedding hall where they had the reception.

#### **4.2.2. Original Drama**

The Togashi-Moro families had their wedding in the KKR (Government Employee Association) hotel in Tokyo on July 29, 2001, *tomobiki* of Buddhist calendar which is regarded as an auspicious day. The bride's father was a government employee, and the couple received a discount from the hotel for the wedding. The wedding was just for relatives, and no friends were



invited. There was a second reception for the friends and colleagues of the couple after the wedding reception at KKR.

After the private Shinto ceremony at the hotel shrine, at 12:30pm the reception began in the room *Ho-oh* (a Chinese Phoenix), a symbol of magnificence. The Imperial Palace is located next to the hotel, and could be seen from the windows. In the room's arrangement were the couple's main table, four oval tables, twenty-seven guests, and six staff members. Each table was named with auspicious Japanese words, such as pine, bamboo, plum, and crane. The guest's name cards were propped against the fan-shaped yellow napkins on the tables and the napkins were gifts to the guests. Besides the napkin, three different glasses, a cup for *sake*, chopsticks, ashtrays, and menus (but no silver-wear) were placed on the tables. There was a Lazy Susan at the center of the table, which is usually used for Chinese cuisine.

The welcome board, announcing "The wedding reception of Togashi and Moro families" stood at the entrance (see Figure 4.2.5). A gilded folding screen was placed behind the couple, and next to the welcome board as well. After the guests entered, the groom in a black kimono walked into the room and the bride in *shiromuku*, with her mother followed him. When a bride and groom are in kimono, they maintain Japanese tradition, and do not walk side by side as when they are in western dress. A female emcee introduced the couple, explaining how they met each other, and what each thought during that first time. Following this announcement, relatives gave congratulatory addresses and toasts.

Before the meal was served, the Grand Chef, Isao Nakamoto, presented explanations for each dish, as the couple requested (see Figure 4.2.6). He gave the culinary explanations following the serving order. The menu was not generic or designed by the KKR kitchen; since the bride knew the reception meal, she herself constructed this menu, and grouped the cuisine



Figure 4.2.5: Welcome board at the entrance.



Figure 4.2.6: The grand chef, Isao Nakamoto presented explanation of the foods.

section and listed the dishes. The menu was written in Japanese form, from the top to the bottom, which is rare for a modern reception since many Japanese aspire to western materials (see Figure 4.2.7). Thus the menu is sometimes written in both Japanese and English, or French languages despite participants not knowing either English or French.

After the first dishes were served, the bride's maternal uncle sung the country song, "*Musumeyo* (Dear my daughter)" pretending to be the bride's real father. This is also a popular wedding song. The lyrics are about a bride's father's complicated emotion toward his daughter's marriage because she would leave his family to be part of her husband's family.

To open the second stage of the reception, the bride and groom returned into the *Ho-oh* room. The bride now wore a yellow evening dress with a yellow shawl, and the groom was in a swallowtail. A basket was in bride's hands filled with nicely wrapped canned tea (see Figure 4.2.8). The groom was anxious to avoid the candle lighting ceremony, because he thought it was tacky, and they distributed the tea instead of performing the ceremony. At the each table, the couple took pictures with their relatives. Some guests performed songs for the couple, and congratulatory telegrams from those uninvited friends or colleagues were read by the emcee.

The couple then returned to the table for the cake-cutting ceremony. The cake was an inedible six-tiered rubber cake. On the bottom, a cream portion was attached so the knife could be inserted (see Figure 4.2.9). The couple held a knife with a pink bow, as the emcee invited guests to take pictures of the couple and the cake.

The bride chose the inedible cake since most guests would not be able to eat cake after the huge meal. Moreover, fresh cake would spoil if the guests took it home. As a result, the cake was not served as a dessert, and a piece of butter cream cake was packed in a small box as a part of the gifts.



富樫  
師 両家結婚披露宴

平成十三年七月二十九日  
K K R ホテル東京に於いて

日本料理	
御造り	姿造り、伊勢海老姿造り、鯖、鰯八、生雲丹、甲烏賊
御蒸物	茶碗蒸
御飯物	祝寿司
御水物	マスクメロン
フランス料理	
オードブル	フォアグラのテリーヌと小さいブッシュェフルーツ詰
魚料理	オマール海老と帆立貝のボワレ ソースアメリカン
肉料理	特選牛ロースのステーキ 赤ワインソース
温野菜	ブロッコリー、ドフィノワイスポテト、キャロット
シャーベット	シャンパンシャーベット
中華料理	
帆立のオリシナルソース味パイ焼きと海老ニラ胡麻饅頭	
わたり蟹とたらば肉入り甲羅詰揚げ飾り付き	
銀杏と松茸入り鮑の炒め野菜添え	



Figure 4.2.7: The menu.



Figure 4.2.8: A canned tea from the newlywed couple.





Figure 4.2.9: The inedible cake.

While guests were consuming the last dishes, the bride's cousin performed a song, "*Anata-ni salada* (the Salad for you)," and forced the bride to join the performance. The cousin brought a bag of vegetables, a cutting board, and a knife to the portable desk in the front, and handed over a white apron with frills to the bride. Although the action of cutting is taboo for a Japanese wedding, most seemed unaware of the taboo as the cousin set out the kitchen utensils. The cousin then asked the bride to prepare salad while she sang the song. The cousin was teasing the bride by having her make a salad in front of the guests, because this bride was an expert on nutrition, and assumed to be a good cook. She cut cucumbers into slices, tore lettuce, and tossed them with dressing (see Figure 4.2.10). By the time the cousin finished singing, the bride had also finished preparing the salad.

Next, the cousin brought the salad to the bride's mother to taste. Then the salad was sent to the groom's mother, to feed it to her husband demonstrating their intimacy. It is rare to see middle aged, or older couples displaying intimacy in public because Japanese rarely tout their emotions, or feelings openly. The salad was then sent back to the bride's mother to feed her husband. Both mothers graded the salad as 100 points. The cousin announced the long term married couples' sweetness, and ordered the bride to feed her husband. He joked about the salad, saying, "It is very good, and especially the vegetables are tasty."

The couple and the guests enjoyed the meal and chatted until it was time to end the reception. The emcee invited the couple's parents to walk toward the screen. They turned back to their children and the guests. The staff members handed flower bouquets to both the bride and groom as they walked toward the parents. Meanwhile, the emcee read the bride's letter to her parents, "I was very weak when I was a child, and you took care of me well and raised me well until today. I appreciate you, and will remember your kindness. When I become a mother, I will





Figure 4.2.10: The bride is making a salad with a white apron as an entertainment.

care for my children as you have done for me. Thank you very much.” The bride’s parents and the guests were moved to tears by the letter. The bride gave the bouquets to the groom’s parents, and the groom presented them to the bride’s parents. All of them were in a line, and the groom’s father gave a speech, the groom speaking after him. They bowed to the guests, and the guests applauded.

The bride informed me that she and her husband tried not to spend too much money for the reception, as the bride gave up wearing *irouchikake* (colorful kimono), which would have cost her another thousand dollars. She also saved money by designing the menu and the order of events for the reception. They purchased gifts for the guests at the hotel: a piece of cake, a Japanese sweet, an Apple pie, and a catalogue gift which was exquisitely wrapped. Although the couple insisted they had tried not to spend extra money, the reception was far from impoverished.

#### **4.2.3. Tradition in the Drama**

Several Japanese traditions were embedded in the receptions—in the interaction between the bridal party and their guests, among the guests themselves, and between children and parents. The beer ceremony is a crucial ritual for Japanese in order to interact. Therefore, beer is always served at every type of reception meal. For example, during the reception and between performances, the couple’s parents visited the guests’ tables to thank to them, and to fill their glasses with beer. Even if a glass was almost full, people still poured, or pretended to pour beer into the glass. The guests go to the main table to fill the groom’s glass as well. One pours beer to congratulate at the wedding, and another receives and consumes it as appreciation. As one’s glass is filled, one should drink or sip from it.

Smoking is another aspect of any Japanese party, thus ashtrays are always placed inside reception rooms. Since the reception lasts over two hours, guests smoke at the table even while others are enjoying food. The male guests especially enjoy the atmosphere around the table with drinking and smoking more than consuming food.

Japanese people use the phrase, “*bureikou*,” which means ‘impolite behavior’ as an excuse for being rude when they drink. It is not in fact, negative behavior. A widespread Japanese ethic is to mind one’s behavior when others are around, meaning that a person should take consideration of others by putting oneself in their position. As a result, Japanese behavior is limited in public. *Bureikou* allows Japanese to release such seriousness, giving them permission to relax. At the guest tables, *bureikou* goes on without people being drunk.

Presenting flower bouquets from the couple to their parents became a standard ritual that is based in children’s filial piety, and sometimes it is accompanied by a bride’s letter to her parents. Filial piety is another powerful ethic amongst Japanese people. Although a bride and groom carry piety toward their parents, they do not present the bouquets to their own parents, but to their partner’s parents. In this case, the bouquets are symbols of the link to their new family and family members. However, as the Oda-Yokomori couple did not have the ceremony, some of their guests whispered to each other, “Why are they not presenting flower bouquets to their parents?” or “I could not cry (because there was no bride’s letter to her parents). Something is missing from the party.”

#### **4.3. Food as the Greatest Common Denominator**

A reception meal should be the Greatest Common Denominator of food; the meal is not necessary to be favored, but designed so as not to be un-favored by any of the guests (Interview with Matsuda, Nakamoto, Samejima). Reception foods should please all guests, both young and

old, because the food stays in the guests' memory more than anything else, even the bride herself. For example, a month after Oda-Yokomori wedding, Kazuko Kezuka, who was a guest, recalled the wedding reception. "It was a simple wedding. I do not remember the bride's dresses at all. Yes, the food was good, that's it" (Interview with Kezuka, August 10, 2001).

Although the meal is selected by the couple, the meal is intended to please the guests, not the couple. In this way, a power relationship among people at the reception meal is established. The chefs, the bridal party, and the guest play a game like "paper, scissors, and stone." The chefs serve, or even force foods upon the guests (a chef > a guest), the bridal party pays money to the chefs to prepare what the party wants (a chef < a bridal party), and the guests are people of great importance to the bridal family (a bridal party < a guest). The importance of a reception meal is based on its general savor to all of the guests, as well as being a vehicle for playfully (and temporarily) reconstructing power relations amongst those in attendance.

The reception meal also demonstrates patterns. Generally, food patterns are always carried by each meal, and "made to yield an analogy with linguistic form" (Douglas 1971:62-64). If we analyze the reception meal in linguistic terms, the meals of Yokomori-Oda families and Togashi-Moro families have three alternate language codes: Japanese, Western (French), and Chinese cuisine. Once a code is chosen, the meals follow a pattern like following grammar of particular language.

The Oda-Yokomori wedding reception meal was structured by French cuisine. Although Japanese, French, and Chinese dishes were served, the course sequence obeyed French food grammar: hors d'oeuvre + soup + main 1 (+ sorbet) + main 2 + salad + desserts. The starting dishes were an *hors d'oeuvre* (French) and crab with shark fin soup (Chinese). The first main dish was fish with oriental sauce (Japanese) and the second main dish was a sirloin steak with

*Calvados*<sup>1</sup> sauce (French), and an extra dish, which could be categorized as the third main dish, was fried marine food with Chinese XO<sup>2</sup> sauce (Chinese). Although there is no staple dish after the main dish in the French meal structure, at the reception Japanese dishes *chakin-zushi* (sushi), *suimono* (soup), and *sarashina- soba* (noodle) were served. The Japanese dishes were to substitute for bread and butter, but they are served commonly in the beginning of the meal and cleared before a main dish for the French cuisine. For Japanese cuisine, rice and soup are starting dishes. On the other hand, Chinese cuisine has a rule of serving rice/noodles after main dishes, and before desserts. Therefore, for the Oda-Yokomori reception meal, after the main courses, the codes switched, and the rules switched from that of French cuisine to that of Chinese cuisine. As the common rule for all desserts, at the end they were served a piece of the wedding cake, fruit cocktail, and coffee instead of tea.

At the Togashi-Moro wedding reception, French rules dominated, even though three cuisine types were served. Chinese food was most prominent. A difference between the Oda-Yokomori and the Togashi-Moro is that the meal for Togashi-Moro involved a substantial amount of Chinese, or Japanese aspects during the French structured meal. For example, several dishes were placed on large plates and guests served themselves instead of staff serving the food to the guests. The large plates were placed on the turning table at the center of the guest's table, so that guests could reach the food easily.

Another aspect of the meal of the Togashi-Moro was the utensil settings. In the beginning, only a pair of chopsticks was set on the table. After the first main dish, a fish dish, and before the second main dish, meat, a fork and knife were placed on the table. This is helpful

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<sup>1</sup> Apple brandy in French.

<sup>2</sup> XO sauce is that "A gourmet condiment made from dried scallops & shrimp, ham, red chili pepper, and spices that's known as the 'Caviar of the Orient'"(Yan 2000:313)

for Japanese who are not used to western cuisines, so that people would not be confused by having to select the western-defined proper knife and fork out of a range of silver-wear. This can be a problem even for Westerners at formal dinners.

The meal was divided into three sections: hors d'oeuvres + main 1 + main 2 + desserts. The hors d'oeuvres were *foie gras terrine* with cream cheese and berry sauce (F), a sea bream sashimi (J), and a savory steamed egg custard (J). The first main dish was also divided into two sections, main 1 and main 2: lobster (F) and beefsteak (F). The second main dish was three Chinese dishes: scallop pie, shrimp dumpling, and fried crabs, and then sushi (rice + fish), followed by desserts: champagne sorbet, melon, and coffee. There was no cake at all.

Bread was served at neither reception, because Japanese foodways influenced the overall cuisine. When used in western cuisine, rice plays multiple roles: a vegetable, a substitute for bread, or pasta. Japanese however, live on rice as a principle food. Rice is not a vegetable at all for Japanese, and rice and *miso* soup are served at every meal if possible. Nutritionally speaking, rice assumes the role of western equivalents at each meal. During Japanese breakfast, rice assumes the role of cornflakes, or toast; at lunch rice acts as a sandwich; and at dinner, rice is again bread, pasta, etc. Therefore, both rice and bread do not co-exist in the same meal for Japanese.

If bread is served, the entire meal is unified as a western meal, never as a Japanese, or a Chinese meal. On the other hand, rice is occasionally combined with either Japanese, western, and Chinese cuisines. The role of rice illustrates the importance of foodways even after western and Chinese cuisines were adopted into Japanese cuisine (Ishige 1975:178-179). The fundamental traditional foodways remain even after the Japanese were westernized, or

modernized, as the reception meal meets the needs of Japanese traditional foodways for all participants.

#### **4.4. Wedding Business and Food**

“Morning Sun” was the wedding plan which the Oda-Yokomori couple selected from several other options. Commonly Japanese couples select plans recommended by a hotel, or parlor. Consequently, the wedding business constantly innovates in order to compete and satisfy guests’ demands.

I interviewed two women about their wedding plans. Nakahara had a wedding in May 2001 at the Hotel Airline Tokyo, located in the subdivision commonly frequented by trend-conscious individuals. Hotel Airline Tokyo supplies three unique wedding plans, ‘Roses in Sahara’ (\$10,870 per 50 guests), ‘Platinum Millennium’ (\$12,470 per 50 guests), and ‘Amber Amrita’ (\$8,074 per 30 guests) until March 2002, whereupon new plans will be offered as of April 2002. The differences between the three plans are to do with the quality of the reception meals and table decorations.

Nakahara selected the plan, ‘Roses in Sahara’ for their wedding on May 20, 2001. The ceremony was at the garden chapel, and the reception was in a room called “Pegasus.” One hundred eighty seven guests were invited for the reception. The plan was based on the color pink, and provided marshmallow towers beside fresh flowers as decoration for each table, including the couple’s table. The marshmallows were piled like the French cake, *croque en bouchée*. According to the salesclerk of the hotel, the marshmallow was a symbol for sweetness and love, while the piles were an image of the growth of the couple’s love for many years (Internet Interview with Ms. Okawa, the hotel, August 12, 2001).

Ms. Kirayama and her fiancé reserved their wedding at Hotel Grand Pacific Meridian for October 2001. She had wedding brochures of the hotel. They presented a 21<sup>st</sup> century wedding plan, “*Recevoir 21*,” the theme for which was an elegant atmosphere with French style. Dresses and cakes provided by the hotel enhanced the French atmosphere as well, matching the couple’s bouquets and table flowers. The French cuisine used the best quality ingredients, with a new style of presentation, and three types of menu called, Blue, White, and Green. The difference between them was their prices, related to the quality of ingredients used in the food. Although each meal was based in French cuisine, they would serve at least one Japanese dish.

Nakahara and Kirayama were anxious to present meals that look fancy and taste nice like French cuisine, though they invited, or would invite older relatives who might not prefer innovative cuisine. In fact, Japanese cuisine usually costs more than French at the hotel. Hotel Grand Pacific Meridian Hotel provides three different prices for each cuisine: on season price (weekends of March, April, May, June, October, and December), off season price (weekends of other months except August), and the price of weekdays, *butsumetsu* (Buddhist calendar), and August. The prices of Japanese cuisine are ¥26,000 for on season, ¥24,000 for off season, and ¥23,000 (\$208, \$200, and \$183) per person. On the other hand, the prices of French cuisine are ¥22,500, ¥21,000, and ¥20,000 (\$180, \$167, and \$160).

In order to collect the information about wedding services of parlors, or hotels, couples, or a mother and her daughter visit several bridal fairs. Some hotels or parlors have established the bridal fair section inside the building. A wide array of wedding materials is displayed, and an employee provides information about weddings. I visited the bridal section of the Meguro Gajoen, a reception hall in Tokyo. There were about 20 booths, or tables for customers to make a wedding plan. Mr. Kawanabe took charge of my meeting, and showed me different types of



ceremony, reception, rental kimono and dresses, reception meals, gifts, photos and their prices. He took me to the Shinto wedding room and a Chapel attached to the parlor. We ventured inside the reception room where one couple would have a reception later that night. Mr. Kawanabe informed me that couples should make the reservation with deposit as soon as possible, or they would not be able to select a favorite day, or time, for their event.

Another bridal fair I attended was at the Nankai Hotel 33, in Tokyo, at noon on June 3, 2001. Customers made a reservation for lunch or dinner, in order to taste a reception meal. At the fair, the customers are served a French full course at one third of the regular price. There were four other couples at the fairs. Although the advertisement for the hotel was about testing the reception meal, I was served just the regular French meal. The advertisement was not exactly correct, although the hotel used it to attract customers. After the lunch, the staff asked participants to fill out a questionnaire, and most of the questions inquired about favorite foods, or plates for reception meals.

If such a generalization can be made, Japanese are curious about food. For example, there are a variety of TV programs about food. One student visiting Japan from Spain during the course of my fieldwork commented, “Whenever I turn on the TV, Japanese are eating” (Interview with Marcos, August 13, 2001). One of the popular foreign TV program in the United States, ‘Iron Chefs’ is from Japan. It is a culinary show where two chefs are invited to compete over dishes. The show was popular in Japan, eventually advancing into U.S. programming. ‘Food’ is one of popular themes amongst Japanese, and the wedding industry uses it to enhance their services.

Another crucial issue for Japanese people is ‘Western culture,’ as many individuals are eager to adopt it. The wedding magazine, *Zeksi*: introduces the Royal wedding in the hotel

*Sunlife Garden* in Kanagawa, a neighboring prefecture of Tokyo. A real British church was dismantled from Scotland and reconstructed in Kanagawa. The church is Victorian style, originally built in 1877 in Scotland. The magazine gives explanation of the church saying, “A couple will have its ceremony at the white cathedral. There is a ceiling as high as 15m, the 17m long virgin road, space for 200 guests, stand glasses, and a British priest takes charge of the ceremony” (Zeksi:, 2001:868).

The modern Japanese wedding has a general pattern which individuals follow, incorporating personal modifications. The wedding resembles a two-act-show in which an emcee and chef conduct other participants—the bridal party and guests—for two and a half hours. The show’s main event is a reception meal occupying more than a half of the show.

French cuisine has been widely adopted into the Japanese wedding reception meals; all the reception meals discussed in this chapter were either French, or a combination of French with other cuisines. When the meal is a combination, it usually follows French meal structure, although at times arranged according to Chinese rules. However, the reception meal always respects Japanese individuals and Japanese foodways, serving the staple food, rice, instead of bread, or pasta.

Overall, the wedding plans, or reception meals are provided by the wedding parlors and hotels, with their wide range of advertising and influence over the Japanese consumer. As a Japanese insider/outsider, I occasionally feel the urge to use a term such as “brainwashing” to describe the wedding industry’s grasp over Japanese couples heading for marriage. However, I realize the industry cannot exist without its consumer, who ultimately holds the autonomy to reject or accept these hybrid packages and products.

## **CHAPTER 5: *LA VIANDE*: FOOD BEHAVIORS IN GENDER AND CULTURE**

*LA VIANDE* (meat): The second main dish and the last luxurious and notorious food.

### **5.1. Introduction**

Food behaviors differ by virtue of numerous factors, such as gender and culture, hence the study of food behaviors can and should be approached in a variety of ways. One approach I find valuable is to examine “the beliefs and behavior surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of food” (Counihan 1999: 2). As applied to a wedding reception meal, this approach illuminates that people have certain beliefs about food, chefs distribute the food, and guests consume it:

Wedding meals are important ritual events, and wedding meals convey important messages about marriage and the ritual of women in society. To some extent, the menus chosen for wedding meals are a matter of ‘tradition,’ but there are a number of external influences which act upon societal conventions about ‘appropriate’ foodstuffs for wedding meals (Wood 1995:81).

For modern Japanese wedding receptions, Japanese dishes are almost always included as a part of the meal although French cuisine is largely favored. The meals convey messages from the newlywed couple to their guests, illustrated in the case of the reception meal for the guests, rather than for the couple (Interview with a chief chef of Sky Hall, Matsuda).

Reception meal menus are created by a chief chef, who is usually an older man (around 50 or 60 years old). The three chief chefs I interviewed explained that they needed to be sensitive to popular cuisine and current fashion in order to meet the needs of their young customers. Since the bride is the primary decision maker (a groom rarely plans the wedding) regarding the reception meal, traditional Japanese dominance of older male over younger female is reversed in this context. It is exceptional for the bride to design the menu, as Moro did.

The chefs explained that female guests had greater expectations for the meal than did male guests. The chief chef of the Aoyama Diamond Hall, Yamada, stated that women

particularly enjoyed consuming foods. The examples in chapter 4 show that the female guests at the Oda-Yokomori wedding reception paid much more attention to the food while the male guests were drinking and smoking. The chefs thus cook with particular concern for women's judgments. Similarly, at a restaurant or a hotel a man cooks for a woman, which is reversed from the domestic setting.

At home, on the other hand, women have control over meals. Women feed their families and make food themselves: "Women are food to the fetus and infant, and the breasts can be sources of both sexual pleasure and food" (Counihan 1999:63). Women gain power through the food, for example, they refuse to cook, or cook men's disfavored food (1999:11-12). Women in the Trobriand Islands cook for men so that the men can produce semen, which is returned to the women through intercourse, and as a result the women become pregnant (1999:68). However, because Japanese society retains an idea of male-domination, *danson johi* (a man is respected while a woman is lowly), in public, men hold power over even the lowly female task of cooking, as with wedding reception food.

Women's passion toward food is not only in its preparation, but also in its consumption. The chef of Sky Hall, Matsuda, stated that women have greater attachment to food than do men. He said that is probably from women's nature; for example women crave certain foods, or lose their appetite during their menstrual period. Seshimo, the chef of the Japanese restaurant said that the menstrual period causes an uneven sense of flavor in women (Personal communication with the chef of traditional Japanese restaurant, Seshimo, August, 2000).

In this chapter I explore Japanese people's consciousness toward wedding reception food in several ways. One is the male chefs' idea about differences between the reception food and restaurant food and ways of serving foreign foods. I analyze the speech the chef made at the

Togashi-Moro reception. I also explore the women's consciousness toward a reception meal. I distributed questionnaires to 60 women working in the Airline Card Company. The questions asked about the relationship between food and occasions (Include questionnaire in APPENDIX A).

## **5.2. Food and Languages Discourse through the Chefs' Perspective**

From the chefs' perspective, a single serving restaurant meal and a reception meal are different (Personal communication with chefs Matsuda, Nakamoto, and Yamada). The reception meal involves a large number of guests and different food combinations. While customers order food at a restaurant, the guests are served a specially planned meal at a reception. Since the reception meal must appeal to all guests with their varied tastes, each dish should not be too unique, so that everyone can enjoy it.

However, the bride and chef also want to show off uniqueness, and the chef creates new menus several couple of times a year. Beardsworth and Keil's menu pluralism occurs in the reception meal. Menu pluralism is the idea that people adjust "their menu choices to suit their mood, economic circumstances or the setting in which the eating even is taking place" (1997:68). At a reception meal, within a single menu, several combinations are available; the bride can select a dish from each category, such as an *hors d'œuvre*, a soup, and main courses, and present a creative meal. If the selected dishes conflict with each other, the chef offers advice for selections.

A combination of cuisines, like Japanese, French, and Chinese, is also standard as a reception meal. An advantage of having a combination meal is that at least one of the three cuisines will be appreciated by all of the guests. Nakamoto explained the meal: if a meal costs ¥18,000(\$143), it is divided by three and 1/3 of the price is spent for each cuisine. However, if

the dishes were of a wide variety, the guests would not have a sense of being served a whole meal, and they might ask, “What did I eat at the reception?” Chefs are careful not to select the same ingredients for the three cuisines, and not to serve a strongly flavored dish before a lightly flavored dish.

For chefs and hosts alike, ingredients are important issue for the reception meal. Expensive ingredients such as beef, *foie gras*, and lobster are preferred instead of more economical pork or chicken. Although chicken is used for French cuisine, chicken is an inexpensive ingredient even in Japan. According to a price list of Yotsuetsu department store in Tokyo (August 7, 2001), approximate prices per 1 lb of chicken were \$4.50~\$7.30, pork loin was \$11.90, pork fillet was \$13.60, beef sirloin was \$68, and beef fillet was \$36.30.

The reception is a closely timed event. The meal should be served to all of the guests at the same time, and within the schedule of reception events hours. The time schedule is important for a hotel or wedding parlor because usually there is another party to follow, and the party room needs to be cleaned for the next reception. Each reception is scheduled and never over time and an emcee and staff with polite ways push or rush guests’ performance or finishing meal. At the reception of the Oda-Yokomori families, one waiter served seven guests at a table. It took a couple of minutes for the waiter to complete serving each dish to each guest. There was a gap of only a couple minutes between the guest who was served first and another guest who was served last, so that everyone at a table could eat the dish at the same time. Empty plates are also cleared from the table at almost the same time. The staff arrange the timing such that every one would finish the meal together, and the reception could be finished within the given time. Sometimes, however, guests feel rushed, and complain about the timing of food service and the rapid removal of the empty dishes.

At the end of the reception, the guests express appreciation and give compliments about the bride, the whole party, especially the food to the newlywed couple and their families instead of to the chefs. The couple is very careful in selecting the reception meal for their guests, who bring several hundred dollars as a gift. The couple shows care for their guests' special needs by, for example, requesting a child's meal for a young guest or a special diet menu for a guest with food restrictions. At the reception, chefs do not play a main role, but perform a supporting role for the newlywed couple throwing the party.

Unlike at a restaurant, where each person chooses a meal at a reception meal the guests have no control over what kind of food they will be served. Further, the menu, which is given to the guests, does not contain much explanation, just the names of the dishes. Some chefs give an explanation of the meal during the wedding reception, and in this way the guests receive preliminary knowledge of each dish. After the toast, the chief chef at the KKR Hotel, Nakamoto, was introduced by the emcee and came into the room. The chef insisted that knowledge about a dish enhanced the guests' enjoyment of the foods, and even the flavor of the foods become emphasized and tastier to the guests. Therefore he said that his practice was to provide an explanation of all dishes before the meal was served. In his description of the meal that was about to be served, the chef used language in a special way that relates specifically to the wedding. He used English and French words as if they were parts of the Japanese language, and he used specialized food terms in Japanese in order to emphasize Japanese cuisine.

The following text is the explanation from chef Nakamoto at the Togashi-Moro wedding reception. The speech is presented in a normalized translation<sup>1</sup>, which I have divided into three sections, the introduction, body, and conclusion:

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<sup>1</sup> The text is free translation. The polite prefix o- is in bold and French words are underlined.

## I. Introduction

1. *Tadaima go-shoukai-ni agarimashita Nakamoto desu.*

(I am just introduced, Nakamoto).

2. *Honjitsu-wa domo, omedeto gozaimasu.*

(Congratulations.)

3. *Minasama, honrainaraba desune sugu kampai-no ato o-ryori-ga derundesuga, sonomae-ni desune chotto o-ryori-no setsumei-o sasete itadakitai-to omoimasu.*

(Usually, a meal is served after the toast, but I would like to explain the menu briefly.)

4. *Nazekato moushimasuto yahari desune taberumae-ni o-ryori, doiumono-ga haitteruka-to iukoto-o yahari setsumei-o kiite desune meshiagaruno to dewa zuibun aji-ga chigau-to omoimasunde, o-ryori-no setsumei-o sasheteitadakimasu.*

(I believe that you will enjoy the meal more if you have an explanation of the meal before you eat it, thus I would like to give you the explanation of the food.)

## II. Body

5. *Mazu ichiban saisho-ni, honjitsu-no o-ryori desune, washoku, yoshoku, chuuka, soreno secchuu-no cosu-de gozaimasu.*

(First, the reception meal for today is a combination of Japanese, Western, and Chinese cuisine.)

6. *Mazu, honjitsu ichiban saishoni, yoshoku-de, foagura-no terinu-to chiisai busshe, furutsuzume-to gozaimasu. Kore-ga ichiban saisho-ni demasu.*

(The first dish is Western food, *foie gras terrine* with a tart. This is the first food for you.)

7. *Sorede foagura-to iunowa desune, yousuruni minasan gozonji-dato omoimasuga, sekai-no sandai chinmi-no hitotsu. Sekai-no sandai chinmi-to iuno-wa, foagura, cabia, toryuhu desune.*

(*Foie gras* is, I believe you may know, one of the three delicacies in the world. The delicacies are *foie gras*, *caviars*, and *truffles*.)

8. *Sore-no hitotsudearu foagura. Foagura-to iuno-wa, hitotsu chotto, hanashi nagaku narimasuga, kamo-o desune, kamo-to, kamo-o desune, hora..., Furansu nankadewa, kamo-o isshuukan bakari desune chiisai usugurai heya-ni desune, daitai nihyaku kara sanbyappa gurai irete desune, ori-ni desune, ichimatsu zenbu...ni irechau wakedesu.*

(*Foie gras* is the one of these. Its explanation is a rather long story. In France, approximately 200 or 300 ducks are penned up inside a dark, small room for a week.)

9. *Sorede, ichinchi nikai desune, kamo-ni esa-o ataerun desune.*

(The ducks are fed twice a day.)

10. *Yousuruni, undo sasenai wakedesu.*

(In a word, the ducks cannot move.)

11. *Sono esa-to iuno-wa, tomorokoshi nandesu.*

(Their food is corn.)



12. *Tomorokoshi-o hitoban desune, mizu-ni fuyakashite yawarakakushitamono-o desune, kamo-ni, iyaou nashi-ni desune, kuchi-o kou (gesture) akesasete, ibukukro-ni desune, jogo gozaimasune, jogo-no sono futoi yatsu-ga nagaino-ga arundesu-ga, sore-o desune, kamo-o muriyari-ni kuchi-o akesasete, soko-ni desune, tomorokoshi-o, ichinchi ichikiro desuka, tabesasechau wake desune.*

(The corn is soaked in water for a whole night until it becomes soft. The ducks are forced to open their mouth, and one kilogram of the corn per day is forced into the ducks' stomach directly by a big, long funnel.)

13. *Sorede tomorokoshi jitai-ga, naka-ni, busshitsu, amino-to iu bussitsu gozaimashite, sore-o shoka kyushu sareru-to desune, abura-ni ko, kawaru wakenandesu.*

(One of the nutrients of corn, amino acid, turns to fat when the corn is digested.)

14. *Desukara, mashite, tabete, ningen-mo sounandesuga (laughs), tabete, undo shinai-to, sorede, dandan kanzo-ga hidai shitekuru wakedesune.*

(The liver of the ducks gets fat by eating without doing exercise, the same as humans' liver (laugh).)

15. *Sore-o, tsubushite, taberu wakedesune.*

(The fatty liver is mashed for human consumption.)

16. *Desukara, ningen-ga ichiban, zankokuda-to omoimasu-ga, hijyoni, oishi ryori-de gozaimasu.*

(Therefore, it is a delicious food although many humans consider [this process of feeding the ducks] to be cruel.)

17. *Sore-o, terinu-ni shitate agemashite, soko-ni, chiisai pai-o desune, kuriimu chiizu-o, sore-ni, kuriimu chiizu-o, kuriimu-to awasete, soko-ni buruberii desune, soreto ato furanbowazu, kiichigo, sore-o kazattano-ga, mazu, detekimasu.*

(We make the liver into *terrine*, and we decorate it with a small piecrust and cream that is made of cream cheese, blueberry, and *framboise*, raspberry. This dish is served first.)

18. *Sonotsugi-ni otsukuri.*

(*Otsukuri*<sup>2</sup> is served next.)

19. *Kore washoku nandesuga, sugata, tai desune, sugata zukuri, ise-ebi, menyu-ni kaitegozaimasu-ga, maguro, kanpachi, namauni, ato koichiban.*

(This is a Japanese dish, in which a sea bream is sliced and formed into the original shape, and a lobster as description on the menu, tuna, amberjack, sea urchin eggs, and pickled vegetable.)

20. *Kore-ga o-shokuji-de dete mairimaus.*

(This dish is served.)

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<sup>2</sup> The fish is cut and reassembled on a plate like a puzzle.

21. *Sonotsugi-ni yosemono-de, yahari, washoku-de chawanmushi-ga demashite.*  
(The next dish is also Japanese food, yosemono<sup>3</sup>, a savory steamed egg custard with assorted ingredients.)
22. *De, sonotsugi-ni desune, yoshoku-de, omaru-ebi to hotategai-no poware. Sosu, American sosu.*  
(Then, a Western dish, *poêlée* (sautéed) American lobster and a scallop with sauce, American sauce.)
23. *Kono omaru-ebi-to moshimasuno-ga, ise-ebi to chigai mashite, tsume-ga desune, tsume-no, kono okkii yosuruni American lobustaa desu.*  
(The American lobster differs from other lobsters in the size of its claw. The American lobster has bigger claws.)
24. *Kore, ano kanada-san desuga, sore ano sotei shimashite, hotategai-to issho-ni desune sotei shite, yahari, sono, ebi-no kara-de tsukutta American sosu. Sore-o kakete, o-ryori dasasete itadakimasu.*  
([We] sauté the American lobster, which is in fact from Canada, with the scallop. [We] serve it with an American sauce made from the lobster's shell.)
25. *Sonotsugi-ni, yahari o-niku, yoshoku nandesuga, tokusen gyū rosu-no suteeki aka wain sosu.*  
(Then a meat dish, a Western food, is also served. This is a special sirloin steak with a red wine sauce.)
26. *Suteeki, senaka-no rosu desune. Sore-o suteeki-ni shimashite, aka wain-o tsukatta o-sosu. Sorede detekimasu.*  
(The meat is from the back of the beef, with the sauce made from red wine.)
27. *Sonotugi-ni chuugoku ryori-ga san pin tsuzukimasu.*  
(Then three Chinese dishes are served.)
28. *Hotategai-no originaru sosu aji pai zutsumi.*  
(Scallops are stuffed inside of a piecrust with an original sauce and piecrust.)
29. *Paiyaki-to ebi, nira, goma manju desuka.*  
(The baked pie and dumplings are made with shrimps, leeks, and sesame seeds.)
30. *Kochira desune, hotategai-no kaibashira, kochira-o desune, yoosuruni, miso-to desune, paceri, sore-o awaseta sosu-de fumi zuke-o shimashite, karyoku-o sukoshi irete desune, karuku fuumi-o ikashite, hotategai-to isshoni pai-de kurunde yaita mono-ga detekimasu.*  
(The scallop is pickled with *miso* (Japanese roux) and parsley. The scallop is stuffed inside the piecrust and baked at high heat to enhance the flavor.)

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<sup>3</sup> A steamed dish made with mashed fish or eggs with assorted ingredients.

31. *Sonotsugi-ni chuugoku ryori-de watarigani to tarabagani iri korazume age kazari tsuki desune.*

(Next is a Chinese dish, two different crabs stuffed inside their shells and fried.)

32. *Kochiramo watarigani, kono kora-ni desune, yahari sono watarigani-o, ajitsuke shimashite, soko-ni naka-ni iretedesune, agete panko-o tsukete ageta mono-ga detekimasu.*

(First, the crabmeat is flavored and stuffed into the shells, and then they are fried with breadcrumbs.)

33. *Sonotsugi-ni ichiban..., saigo-ni chuugoku ryori-de, ginnan-to matsutake, awabi-no itame yasaizume.*

(Next is the last dish, a Chinese dish of fried ginkgo nuts, *matsutake* mushrooms, abalone, and vegetables.)

34. *Kochira desune, awabi, sonomono jitai-o supu-de yojikan gurai desune, nite gozaimasu.*

(The abalone itself was already stewed for four hours.)

35. *Desukara, hijoo-ni yawarakaku, o-meshiagari itadakemasu.*

(Therefore, its texture is very soft.)

36. *Sore-to, ato-wa, iwaizushi. Kochira desune, iwaizushi-no kohaku desune. Honjitsu-ha, tai-to maguro, soreno, nigirizushi-o yooi sasete itadakimashita.*

(*Celebration-sushi*<sup>4</sup> is served. The *sushi* has two colors, red and white; for today's reception tuna is red and sea bream is white.)

37. *Sore-to saigo-ni, shaabe..., shanpan shaabetto, masuku meron, koki-to.*

(At the end, sorbet..., champagne sorbet, melon, and coffee are served.)

38. *Konoyou-ni, o-shokuji noho, yoi sasete itadaite orimasu.*

(This is the menu for you.)

### III. Conclusion

39. *Dozo, minasama, to hoteru, wa-yo-chu, kimochi-o komete, o-ryori-o tsukutte orimasunode, doka, o-ryori-no aji-o tanoshinde itadaketara-to omoimasu.*

(This hotel [we—the hotel chefs], prepared the Japanese, Western, and Chinese dishes from our hearts to please you. We hope you will enjoy the meal.)

40. *Domo honjitsu-ha, omedeto gozaimasu. Arigato gozaimashita.*

(Congratulations for today. Thank you very much [for paying attention to my speech].)

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<sup>4</sup> The *sushi* was named 'celebration-sushi' because of red (tuna) and white (sea bream) represented celebration.

In the introduction and conclusion, the chef uses language in a special polite way specific to the occasion of the wedding reception. For example, in line 2, he greeted the group by saying, “congratulations” to all participants by looking at the guests instead of looking at the newlywed couple. The chef congratulated all the guests because they are related to the newlywed couple, or their families; because of their association with the honored couple, the chef honored and congratulated the guests. In line 3, the chef emphasized the uniqueness of the wedding reception by saying, “Usually the meal is served after the toast” because the chef presented the food explanation soon after the toast but before the first course of the meal was served. At a modern Japanese wedding reception, usually the toast comes immediately before the first dish is served. Thus, the chef appealed to the unique party by using the word “usually.” At the same time, the chef gave a reason for the explanation to catch the guests’ attention stating that the guests would be able to enjoy the meal better after hearing his speech about it.

At the end of the explanation, the speech was concluded with “congratulations” again and appreciation for his listeners, the participants of the reception, saying, “Thank you very much.” However, before he concluded the speech, in line 39, he reminded the guests of the other hotel staff and the hotel. He mentioned that his staff cooked the meal, so the guests would know that there were many people involved in the meal. Chef Nakamoto also took the opportunity to remind the guests that the party was at a hotel, not a restaurant, by uttering the words, “this hotel” in the line 39 as an employee of the hotel. In effect, his words are an advertisement to the guests to have other occasions there, although he does not name the hotel itself.

After the introduction and conclusion, the chef began the body of his text by asking politely to be excused for giving a long speech and moving on to provide extra information by saying, “*chotto, hanashi nagaku narimasuga* (Its explanation is a rather long story)” in line 8

when he explained *foie gras*. This type of disclaimer about the length of the speech is a common introduction to formal speeches, congratulatory addresses, or less related speeches. The chef made this statement in order to be polite to the participants of the party. Actually, in line 3, the chef said, “*chotto o-ryori-no setsumei-o saseteitadaktai-to omoimasunde...*(I would like to explain the menu briefly).” The Japanese word “*chotto*” is translated into English in several ways, such as “little,” “few,” “slightly,” “bit,” “somewhat,” “moment,” “excuse me,” “listen,” and so on. “*Chotto*” in line 3 is translated into “briefly” and in line 8 is “little.” Although in line 3, the chef meant 5 ~ 6 minutes explanation out of the entire reception, in line 8, he was eager to give detail explanation of one particular ingredient for one minute out of five minutes talk.

As a conversational strategy, honorification is especially important for all Japanese formal occasions, including wedding rituals; a speaker’s (the chef’s) admiration or respect for, or politeness to a hearer (the participants of the reception) is expressed through intonation, specific choice of words, or particular selection of syntactic construction (Tsujimura 1997:362-364). Japanese society values politeness, and when it comes to a wedding honorific, words and morphemes appear with high frequency. One nominal prefix categorized as honorific is [*o-*]. For example, *o-shokuji*, *o-ryori*, *o-niku*, *o-sousu*, and *o-meshiagari* are constructed *o* + *shokuji* (meal), *o* + *ryori* (dish), *o* + *niku* (meat), *o* + *sosu* (sauce), and *o* + *meshiagari* (polite word for eat). The chef used the prefix [*o-*] for foods in order to honor the guests by verbally enhancing each food item with a delicious honorific prefix. The honorification appears with highest frequency in the introduction and conclusion of the speech.

As mentioned above, the ingredients of each dish are important components of the wedding reception meal. Because a newlywed couple requests the meal for their guests, the guests cannot know the price of the meal (unless they have visited bridal fairs themselves), so the

guests must figure out its value by the menu, and by the ingredients in the food served. Japanese youth are sensitive toward foreign ingredients that are highly influenced by fashion. However, it is not easy for elder guests to figure out the value of foreign foods. They usually look at the volume of the meal and value of Japanese dishes like sushi, noodle to criticize the reception meal.

As a Western food, *foie gras* was introduced with a long explanation, from line 6 to line 17. The chef emphasized that it was one of the world's three delicacies, and credits the connoisseurship of the guests by granting that probably everyone had heard of it saying, "I believe you may know." He explained the special processes of handling and feeding the ducks, and the process of making their livers into *foie gras*. Another Western food is an American or Canadian lobster, and the chef explained differences between it and other lobsters by saying, "The American lobster has bigger claws" in line 22.

Sea bream, an auspicious Japanese seafood regardless of its price, is typically served for Japanese celebrations. However, it is not an appropriate ingredient for French or Chinese cuisine because the sea bream is categorized as a low rank fish in France, and it is rarely cooked as Chinese cuisine. Therefore the bream dish is necessarily Japanese. Lobster is another lucky seafood because of its magnificent figure and the strong red color when it is boiled (Namikawa and Shinojima 2000:114-125). As mentioned in chapter 3, red indicates happiness and celebration. An abalone, sea urchin egg, and *matsutake* mushroom are also considered to be high-class ingredients.

Two different high-valued crabs were cooked and served as Chinese dishes. The Japanese language distinguishes the crabs, but English does not have individual terms for them. Specific explanations of the Chinese dishes are less necessary, because they are familiar food to

Japanese. Japanese people knew the approximate value for the ingredients, so the names of the ingredients immediately indicate “expensive foods.”

In addition to haute cuisine Japanese dishes, Japanese home cooking fare was also part of meal. *Koichiban* is pickled vegetables, and is made at home. Usually it is served with a main dish, so *koichiban* is a supporting dish and it is rarely priced; in short it is free at a restaurant. However, it appears at almost every Japanese meal and serves as a snack with drinks. Essentially, Japanese believe that a meal would be incomplete without it. At a Japanese tavern, *koichiban* is a good advertisement to keep customers who enjoy drinking with a good free snack (Namikawa and Shinojima 2000:64-69). The *koichiban* at the reception dinner allows the men to better enjoy their drinks with their meal.

The chef used Western vocabulary but he did not use any Chinese vocabulary. He spoke in Japanese and explained Japanese dishes with Japanese terms. Some English words are adopted into Japanese, and it is common to use English vocabulary with Japanese vocabulary, and sometimes to create new words, like a combination of beef and roasting, *gyu* (beef) + *rosu* (abbreviation of roasting). Other English words, ‘American,’ ‘blueberry,’ ‘Canada,’ ‘coffee,’ ‘cream cheese,’ ‘hotel,’ ‘melon,’ ‘menu,’ ‘original,’ ‘parsley,’ ‘pie,’ ‘raspberry,’ ‘sauce,’ ‘soup,’ ‘steak,’ ‘wine’ were used naturally because they have already become Japanese words and the honorific prefix *o-* is added to sauce: *o-sosu* (line 26).

Unlike the English language, Japanese people are not familiar with the French language, but they— especially Japanese youth— do know some food names such as *foie gras terrine*, *poêlée*, *framboise*, *caviar*, *truffle*, and *sauté* because of Japanese sensitivity toward Western foods. The chef thought the French word, *framboise* might not be a familiar word for Japanese speakers, therefore, rephrased the word into a Japanese word, *kiichigo* (raspberry) in line 17, so

that the guests were able to recognize the ingredient. The use of exotic English words verbally enhances the value of the Western cuisine.

Although the Chinese dishes were explained in Japanese language, not a single Chinese word was uttered. One of reasons for the lack of Chinese vocabulary is that Japanese text, as in the menu, contains Chinese characters, although its phones are different. Therefore, even though names are written in Chinese characters, they were pronounced in the Japanese way. Another reason is that Japanese people have a strong attraction to Western cultures and language rather than to other Asian cultures and languages. It is therefore valued as attractive and fashionable for Japanese youth to use English or French words but not to use Chinese words.

At the same time, the chef used high category names for familiar Japanese dishes in order to make them sound like high-grade dishes. *Yosemono*, in line 21, is a general *kaiseki* (see below section 5.3) term for a steamed dish, and the particular dish served at the reception was *chawanmushi*, a savory steamed egg custard with assorted ingredients. *Chawanmushi* is very common home cooking, and cooked easily. However, only a few people are familiar with the *kaiseki* term *yosemono*, and most of the guests did not know it until they heard the name of the dish, *chawanmushi*. By hearing it called *yosemono*, the guests could consider home cooking as an haute cuisine dish.

Each cuisine was introduced in such a way as to describe an expensive meal. Expensive ingredients, foreign language, and special Japanese terms marked the Japanese, Western/French, and Chinese cuisine as haute cuisines. The food explanation from the chief chef enhanced the value of the meal as well. At a restaurant, usually a waitress/waiter explains individual dishes as s/he serves the dishes, but chefs, especially chief chefs rarely appear in front of customers just to explain the dishes. Therefore, both having the chief chef at the party and his talk emphasized the



course lavished upon made the guests feel even more honored. When I interviewed the chef on the following week of the party, he said that he would give the food explanation at any parties if guests request to do so.

### **5.3. Foodways and Japanese Women-Questionnaire Results**

Dining out is entertainment for Japanese people. I chose female workers of the Airline Card Company in order to figure out Japanese women's foodways since women control food and have food knowledge. Approximately eighty percent of the company population is women and 86% out of it is in 20's and 30's in their age (Personal communication with Kawashima of Airline Card Company, October, 2001). I assumed that women in their 20's and 30's would be recently married, or have attended others' weddings recently, so they might know about wedding food.

The female workers of the Airline Card Company talked about their food habits, like dining out, which made them more critical of taste. Guests with refined tastes make it difficult for a bride to select a meal for a wedding reception (Personal communication with Ogata, 1994). Further, many different types of restaurants, such as European, Asian, traditional Japanese, and sushi, are located in Tokyo, and people thus have a variety of restaurants to select from for each occasion.

Based on a bridal magazine, Zéksi: (2001), I identified the four most popular wedding cuisines: French, Italian, Chinese, and Japanese. Sushi written two words *su* (celebration) (see Figure 3.6.1) and *shi* (govern) is an individual dish and it is always served as a reception dish, thus sushi is included in items of dining out. The magazine also mentioned other cuisines, such as California cuisine, *nouvelle Chinoise*, and borderless cuisine (mingling several foods), but the demand for them at reception meals is very low.

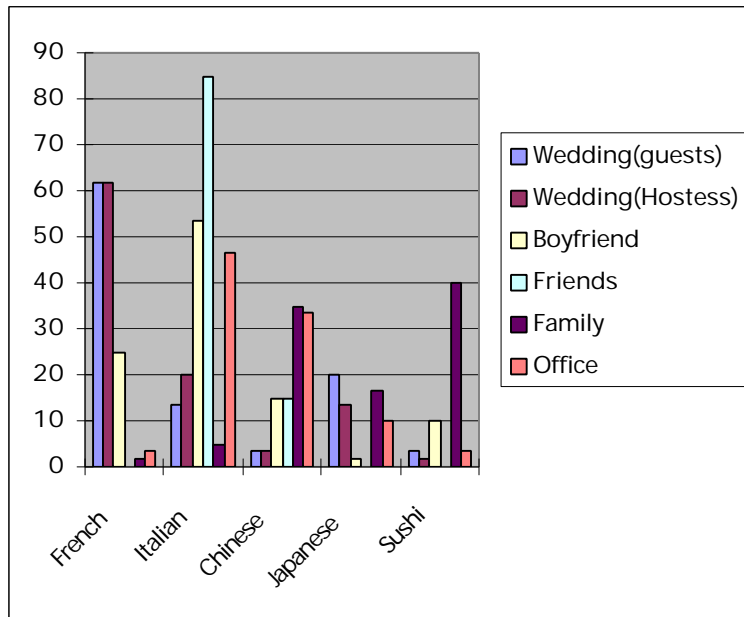
I constructed a questionnaire that asked which food was the female workers favorite for different occasions (see APPENDIX B). Results showed that Italian cuisine was favored as a party meal (see Table 1). Italian cuisine was a fad in the mid 1990s amongst Japanese youth (Personal communication with Samejima, May 31, 2001). Italian food is called *itameshi*, made up of an abbreviation of Italian, *ita*, and the Japanese word to address a meal, *meshi*. The word *itameshi* was also fashionable, and Japanese youth preferred to say, “Let’s go to have *itameshi*” instead of “Let’s go to have Italian.” Nowadays, few Japanese use the word, but Italian cuisine is still popular.

The office workers chose Italian food for dining out with friends, boyfriends, or colleagues. A main reason was that the cuisine was fashionable but inexpensive. Other reasons they gave were “We can enjoy food with chatting,” “less formal,” or “reasonable price.” They also replied that there were many choices of Italian restaurants. An additional advantage for Italian food is they did not need to be worried about the number of people in the group, because Italian food is served in large dishes, so many people can share.

Although Chinese cuisine was the second favored for party occasions, Chinese cuisine was considered to be less fashionable. Therefore, it was suitable for family or office activities. Since Chinese cuisine is also served in large dishes, people could taste several plates instead of one specific dish. Both Italian and Chinese cuisines are served with big plates, and people can share food easily. For a large number of people, like a party, Chinese and Italian food is convenient.

Unlike Italian and Chinese cuisine as a party meal, Japanese cuisine was indicated in the survey results as a preferred individual meal. A formal Japanese meal is called *kaiseki* which literally means a meeting place, and originates from a tea ceremony dish *kaiseki* 懷石 which

Table 5.1: Relationships between cuisines and occasions.



has another meaning, made up of two words *kai* (bosom, pocket) and *seki* (stone). It is important for *kaiseki* and Japanese dishes that a hot dish should be eaten while it is hot, and a cold dish should be eaten while it is appropriately cold (Personal communication with a tea master, Arai, 2001). There are many rules surrounding *kaiseki*; one of them is the order of serving and consuming dishes. One *kaiseki* 会席 is a meal constructed around the enjoyment of *sake*, in other words drinking. Only *sake* is served through the meal until rice is served. The order of the meal is ①an appetizer, ②flavored hot water, ③*otsukuri*, ④a warm and seasoned dish, ⑤a baked food, ⑥a bowl dish of vegetable, ⑦a side dish of vegetable, ⑧rice, ⑨soup, and ⑩picked vegetables. Another type of *kaiseki* 懷石 is a meal to enjoy tea, and its order is ①pickled vegetables, rice, and soup, ②a warm and seasoned dish, ③a baked food, ④a big bowl dish, ⑤flavored hot water, ⑥a dish of vegetable and seafood, ⑦a side dish of seasoned vegetables, and ⑧water rice and pickled vegetables (Namikawa and Shinojima 2000:306-313).

Both *kaiseki* require consumers to eat dishes in a certain order. For examples, *kaiseki* for tea has a strict rule; first, rice and soup are consumed, and the fish should not be eaten before

sake is served, which comes after a couple of bites of rice and sips of soup have been taken. The dishes are all based on fish and vegetables because the cuisine was developed from Buddhist vegetarian diet<sup>5</sup> and fish as a Japanese typical ingredient when a meat diet was abandoned (775-1192 AD) (2000:70-75).

All *Kaiseki* meals have more than several dishes and require a lot of work; it has been generally abandoned in home cooking. Although the individual dishes of both *kaiseki* are sophisticated home cooking, it has become a dining out meal because of the amount of work required and the difficulty of its preparation. As a result, *kaiseki* has become formal and a sort of haute cuisine.

In the survey results, Japanese *kaiseki* was not highly favored but was equally preferred for any occasion except dining out with boyfriends or friends. The female workers believed that *kaiseki* was too formal and expensive to enjoy with friends. Since *kaiseki* is formal, it could be a wedding reception meal, except for its high price.

Sushi is a Japanese haute cuisine, and convenient for both dining out and catering. It is favored for family activities because of its price. The female workers who answered the questions were in their 20's and 30's, and not all of them were married. In Japan, if a woman is not married and is living either with or separate from her family, her parents tend to pay for her food occasionally. This is the reason why sushi was selected frequently for sharing a meal with a family.

Other reasons for sushi being a family food are that it has a variety of fish, and a sushi menu is clear, unlike French or Italian menus. Because sushi is made from rice and fish, a sushi menu does not have any complicated or decorative names that people need to have explained. A

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<sup>5</sup> It is a vegetarian dish because Buddhism forbids an action of killing animals.

family is a group of members who are not the same age, and each member has their favorites. Because of the variety of sushi, all family members from children to elders can enjoy it.

Although Italian and Chinese cuisines are conceivably suitable for the wedding reception as a party meal, they were not selected for the reception meal in questionnaire responses. Rather, French cuisine is instead thought to be most proper for the reception, from both a guest's and a bride's perspectives.

Respondents had certain ideas about a wedding reception meal. The first priority was "hospitality and appreciation toward guests." The guests will spend half a day and bring some two hundred dollars to attend the reception. The reception meal is a substitute for lunch or dinner. The meal is a part of a wedding ritual, so it should be gorgeous. The respondents also think that all guests, from children to elders should enjoy the meal.

Based on the ideas about the reception meal, there are ideas about French cuisine as the reception meal, and the respondents gave additional comments about reasons for French cuisine preference. As a guest and as a bride, the reasons for French cuisine preference were, "French is not a daily meal, but a standard reception meal." "French represents an haute cuisine, and it is proper to have it for a wedding reception." "It looks expensive." "It looks good regardless of its taste." "Longing for French." "It will be a memorable meal." "It is elegant." "Guests are pleased with it." Some people answered that it would take a while to finish the meal, and guests could kill time in a longer reception.

Among Japanese women of marriage age, French cuisine is already a standard reception meal. Even a woman who does not live in Japan has thoughts of Western food like French cuisine that is served with a knife and fork as a Japanese reception meal. Yuki Simpson, who has married an American man, lives in Baton Rouge, LA, with their three children. In 1992,

Yuki and her husband had two wedding receptions, one in Kentucky and one in Germany, where he grew up. Yuki described their reception in Germany was similar to a reception in Japan because their reception meals— a formal Western (German) dinner with a knife and fork (Personal communication with Yuki, September 11, 2001). She had attended a couple of wedding receptions in Japan ten years ago before her marriage, and French cuisine was at that time already a staple meal for the reception. Therefore, she labeled the formal dinner in her wedding reception, “as the same as a Japanese wedding.”

Turning back to the questionnaire, there are contradictions between the idea about the reception meal and about favorite meals. If people think of a meal as something everyone can enjoy, Italian or Chinese are suitable more than French cuisine. Historically, Italian food is origin of French food (Goody 1998):

It is often suggested that after the break with medieval cookery in Renaissance Italy, the *nouvelle cuisine* was brought to France by the cooks who accompanied Cathérine de' Medici [*Catherine de Médicis*] (1519-1589) on her journey from Florence in 1533 to marry the future Henry II. The notion that French *haute cuisine* went back to the Italian influences following this marriage has been denied by Revel and others (Pitte 1991:120), who have seen French cuisine (like the Italian) as being essentially medieval until the mid seventeenth century (Boucher 1982). Italy had a great impact on northern Europe, as we see in many other cultural spheres (1998:130).

Despite the history of Italian food and the origin of French cuisine and relation with wedding rituals, Japanese images of Italian foods are simple, ordinary, and inexpensive like pasta and pizza, which are almost common Japanese food. These images prevent the guests from appreciating the value of Italian foods when they are served at a reception (Personal communication with Samejima and chefs). Also, in Japan, a history of Italian haute cuisine (5-6 years), which is not just a pasta or pizza, is younger than that of French cuisine. French cuisine begun to be consumed by Japanese civilians after the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 (Personal communication with Tanabe, the owner of French restaurant, *Tante Marie*).

As with Italian cuisine, Chinese cuisine is party food and provides opportunities for interaction with others through sharing large plates of food. However, a couple of the female workers claimed that it was uncomfortable to share Chinese foods with unfamiliar guests at receptions. The Japanese traditional custom of individual servings makes some guests hesitate to get food from a dish that is shared with others.

Because Japanese women seek to be formal and elegant for the reception meal, they prefer French cuisine (polished Italian cuisine) to everyday Italian cuisine. Although Japanese cuisine is polished and takes enough time to fill up the reception hours, it costs more and does not go as well with a bride's costume of Western dresses and with reception locations, such as a hotel or hall that were Western designed. Moreover, the pillar of Japanese cuisine (*kaiseki*) is ignored if it is served to a large number of guests because a hot dish gets cold, or a cold dish gets warm.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

I quoted Roy Wood's statement about the importance of wedding meals in the beginning of this chapter. Wedding meals pass on important messages. In the case of a Japanese wedding reception, the wedding meal presents its gorgeousness, expensiveness, and Western languages to please guests. The meals play an important role in controlling the reception.

The male chief chefs lead other chefs to make the reception meals. The men are in charge of the meal, and in order to please female guests, the chefs cooked a variety of dishes such as Japanese, French, and Chinese. The chef entertained the guests by using expensive ingredients, and culinary delicacies along with linguistic delicacies of honorifics, and French and English vocabularies. The chef tries to meet guests' needs or desire of being out of the daily life and longing for Western culture.

Although the idea of *danson johi* (a man is respected while a woman is lowly) is still retained, Japanese women have gained power as they have gained jobs. Young women have especially stopped cooking, and they have begun to pay for dining out. They dine out instead of cooking at home because they can afford to do so. They train their palates instead of cooking skills. Their food ways shifted from home to public; as a result, the current reception meal is established.

However, an image of French cuisine, an haute cuisine and a standard reception meal, is a fixed idea amongst Japanese people, because French cuisine satisfies the needs of the reception meal, while other cuisines have less ability to do so. French cuisine is also supported by other cuisines to meet an extra need. It is like making *pot-au-feu*: if French cuisine is a roux, other cuisines are ingredients to add to the *pot-au-feu*, like making a combination of Japanese, French, and Chinese. Morales stated, “Many ideas and attitudes about food demonstrate people’s understanding of life”(1995:46). By observing the reception meals in Japanese weddings, it is clear that some aspects of modern Japanese culture are a result of mingling Japanese and other cultures.



## **CHAPTER 6. *LE GÂTEAU*: CONCLUSION**

*LE GÂTEAU*: Dessert is a final dish of the meal, sweet and beautiful.

Japanese rituals, especially marriages, involve social interaction, symbolism, economics, and business. The Japanese maintain traditional foundations at the core of wedding rituals and decorate them with modern aspects from Western cultures.

Engagement, wedding ceremonies, and receptions are wedding rituals. Since the wedding is a family event rather than a religious one, all family members, especially a bride's and a groom's parents, are very much involved in the rituals. The parents may be involved in making or breaking the engagement. The wedding is a ritual to join two families; however, in the process, the bride is treated as an object that is given to the groom, or his family by exchanging dowry. The bride wears white — a white gown, or a white kimono — symbolizing departure from her family. Similarly, white is used to clothe the dead (white kimono) when s/he departs from her/his family.

Japanese weddings have certain forms for ceremonies and receptions (see Figure 6.1). Depending on certain key choices of religious and food, different rules of co-occurrence and sequencing pattern together (Ervin-Tripp 1974:306-312). The ceremonies may be either religious or non-religious. A newlywed couple is free to choose either Shinto or Christian ceremony although most of the couples are neither Shinto nor Christian. If a Shinto ceremony is held, it is not public, and only relatives of the couple are invited. Christian ceremonies are public, and everyone can attend. A reception follows the ceremony, always including a meal. Most reception guests are related to the family, or are acquaintances of the couple's parents.

The type of ceremony influences the associated material culture, such as costumes or food which is the most popular type of gift (Befu 1968:448) served at the reception meal. I chose to focus on only bride's costumes in order to approach association of rituals and

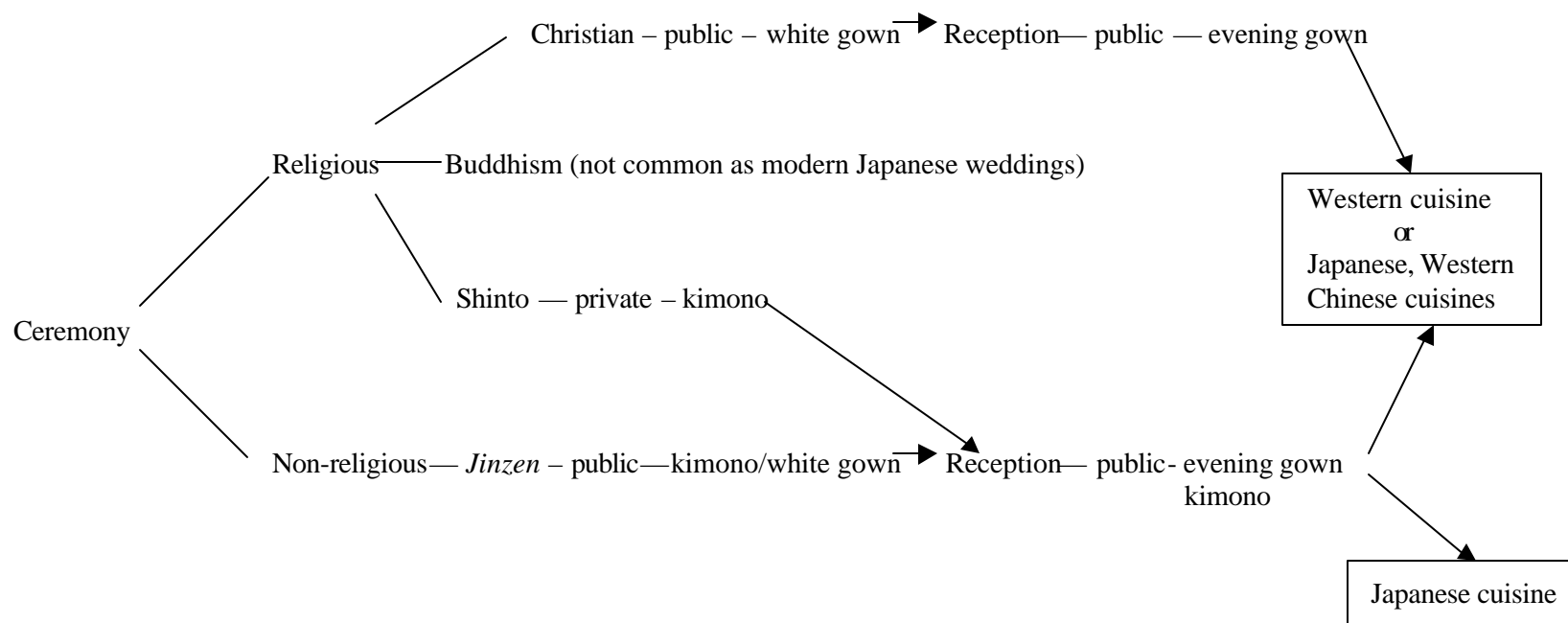


Figure 6.1: A flow chart of modern Japanese wedding ceremonies and receptions.

material culture. Both Japanese kimonos and Western gowns may be worn for the ceremony and reception. Although kimonos are never worn for a Christian ceremony, either Western cuisine or a combination cuisine is served for a reception following a Christian ceremony. Western wedding gowns are never worn for a Shinto ceremony, but western food may be served at the reception that follows. Either kimonos or western clothes are worn for *Jinzen* ceremony that is open to reception guests following the reception. After the ceremony, brides wear a western evening gown at the reception, illustrative of the brides' longing toward Western cultures.

Although each three ceremonies religious Shinto ceremony, Christian, and non-religious ceremony-*Jinzen* incorporate different features of rules and clothing. They move in different directions, as shown in Figure 5; as religious ceremonies, Christian and Shinto draw two separate lines and *Jinzen* ceremony draws another, which Shinto ceremony joins at the reception. However, the two separated lines meet in terms of reception meals: Western cuisine, or the combination of Japanese, Western, and Chinese cuisine. Both cuisines are widely accepted as a reception meal amongst the Japanese. The reception is often held in hotels, restaurants, or wedding reception halls built in Western style, catering to satisfy Japanese youth who favor Western cultures.

Western wedding practices coexist with Japanese weddings traditions by altering their aspects: for example, edible cakes became inedible display cakes. Western cultural features mingle with Japanese cultural features in such a way as to avoid violating Japanese tradition: color, food, or money taboos, and an exchange system of reciprocity. Japanese people also carry hidden traditions, like the beer ceremony between a newlywed couple and their guests. Parents of the newlywed couple and the guests enact the ceremony to congratulate and intimate their relationship.

The wedding industry and wedding magazines provide advertisements involving western fashion models, and provide bridal fairs offering aspects of western weddings, such as church weddings, table settings, dresses, gifts, and reception meals. It would seem that many Japanese people are easily manipulated by the wedding industries, depending on professional support since many are not accustomed to orchestrating a party. The wedding industry offers patterns for weddings: a mini-drama wedding reception, and appropriate gifts and meals. Consequently, there is intense competition among the stores, hotels, and halls involved in the wedding industry.

Gifts and meals are necessary components of the balanced reciprocity used by Japanese in maintaining their social relationships; the guests bring money, or gifts for any rituals and in turn receive gifts. Longest-term reciprocity occurs between the newlywed couple and their parents at the reception. At the end of the reception, the bride reads an acknowledgement letter to her parents to thank them for raising her, as she leaves her own family at this point to become part of her husband's family. The newlywed couple presents symbolic flower bouquets to their parents in exchange for acceptance as new family members; the bride presents a bouquet to the groom's parents, and the groom presents one to the bride's parents. Although Japanese youth may abandon the acknowledgement letter, or the presentation of flower bouquets, these rituals are often maintained in modern weddings. They function to both honor the newlywed couple's parents' guests, as well as the couple's friends.

Reciprocity exists between the newlywed couple and their guests as seen in the wedding reception, where guests bring money as a part of their gifts to a couple. Guests are treated to an haute cuisine meal, and take home gifts that are equivalent to the value of the guests' presents. Therefore, guests expect a quality meal and gift. Further, as many Japanese women are beginning to work outside of their homes, they are currently familiar with a variety of cuisines

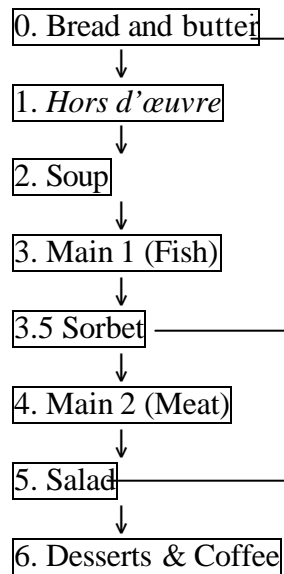
than ever before. The reception meal is prepared especially to honor and satisfy the discerning palates of the female guests. The bride has a stronger voice in decisions about the weddings than does the groom, and as it is considered in Japanese belief a women's nature involves a stronger food passion more than men. As a result, selection of the reception meal and gifts is a central issue for a newlywed couple, especially the bride.

The wedding reception meals have the typical Japanese version of the French, *pot-au-feu*: different cuisines combine to form the reception meal including specifically, Japanese, French, and Chinese cuisines. Although French cuisine is more popular for reception meals, the combination of three cuisines, which is usually addressed "Japanese-Western-Chinese cuisine," is considered a standard meal sure to please all guests. The wedding receptions that I attended served combination meals. Although both reception meals included three cuisines, both followed a French meal structure: *hors d'œuvre* → soup → main 1 and 2 → desserts. Chefs insert three cuisines into the structure and created original meals. For example, bread and butter, sorbet, or salad are omitted from both reception meals (see Table 6.1). A Japanese staple food, rice is presented as sushi, the celebration food in substitution for bread, served at the end of the meal. Japanese noodles are served with sushi as well.

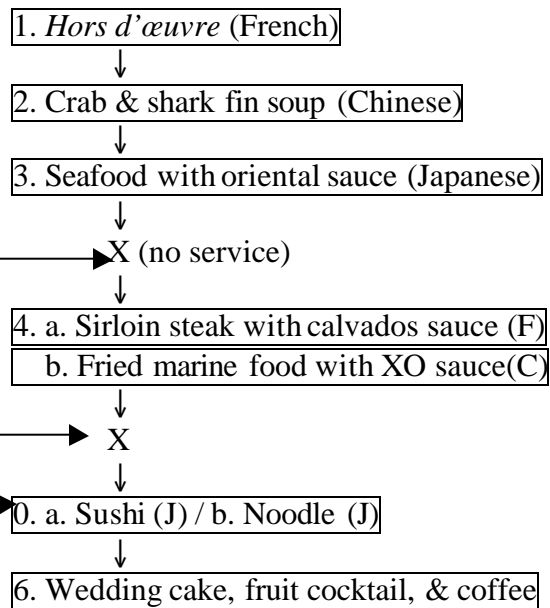
Although three cuisines are served for any courses, Chinese dishes are never served as an *hors d'œuvre* because Chinese food typically has a strong flavor and is not worthy to serve as a first dish. The first dish serves primarily to invoke the appetite of the consumers. No red meat dish is served as Japanese, or Chinese cuisine. Being an island country, Japanese diet is largely seafood-based. Chinese cuisine incorporates fish, pork, and chicken rather than beef. Since pork and chicken are not expensive food, Chinese meat dishes are omitted at the receptions. In addition to receiving the original menu, guests may be further honored through explanations

Table 6.1: The French Cuisine Structures.

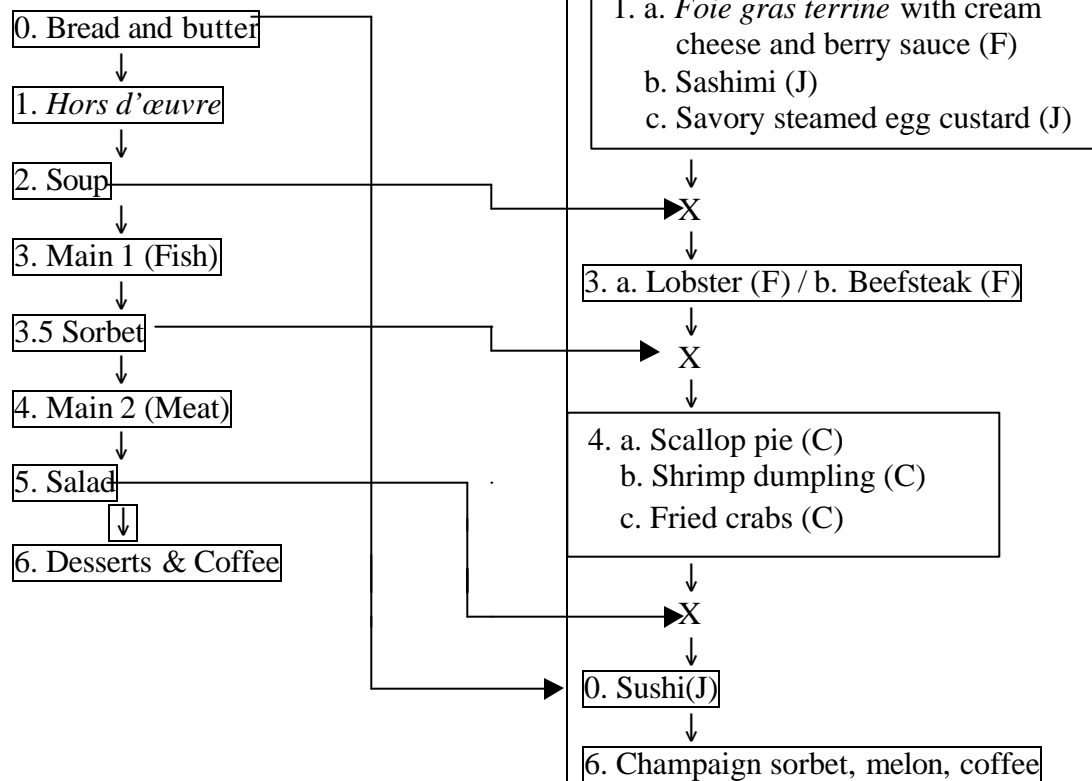
**Formal French course meal**



**The Oda-Yokomori reception meal**



**The Togashi-Moro reception meal**



about the food and honorification of Japanese language. Each dish is presented as a noble food by recitation of its luxurious ingredients, enhanced by aspects of Western languages such as French and English as Western cultures are popular amongst Japanese youth. At the same time, utterances in languages of politeness honor Japanese elders.

In spite of the fact that the combination meal is a standard reception meal, Japanese female office workers selected French cuisine as a reception meal. They conceptualize French cuisine as an haute and extraordinary cuisine, thus it is considered suitable for wedding receptions. However, they prefer Italian or Chinese cuisines when occasions involve a large number of people. Even though French haute cuisine is based on Italian cuisine, it is not considered formal enough to be a reception meal.

Young female office workers identify Japanese cuisine as equivalent to a formal meal, although it is not popular for wedding receptions because it costs more than even French cuisine. Further, people are often too familiar with Japanese cuisine to judge it as an extraordinary meal. People seek special foods for special events. However, Japanese dishes cannot be ignored at the reception meal; people maintain Japaneseness by serving at least one Japanese dish. In his book Gastronomy, French journalist Jean Valby declares:

Cuisine does not depend on fashion or snobbery. It is the expression of race, traditions, as well as regional and national products. So it is important that in each country, each region, the restaurant owners, chefs and gastronomes be the faithful guardians of this treasure, this civilization. They must make an effort to be the guides (1993:37).

According to Valby, Japanese people should be grateful for Japanese cuisine instead of adapting another such as French cuisine, or mixing with foreign cuisines for the Japanese wedding. I sympathize with his reasoning, and regard for preservation of one's own cultural complex. However people's foodways change as their culture changes. Human culture is transmitted from one generation to the next, and adjusted to societal change (Fagan 1999:53). For example,

individuals often prefer inexpensive imported foods to an expensive domestic food. In such cases imported food is eventually adopted as a new diet.

The adaptation of new cultural ways, such as foodways, is a natural outcome of living in a cultural intersection, especially in an age of increasing globalization. Foodways, in the context of Smith's terminology "moving target," are subjected to ongoing interaction of diffusion through media, marketing, or travel. As the *nouvelle cuisine* developed in the 1970s is no longer characteristic of the bounded set of cultural traits which originally defined the genre, so it is with Japanese specialty cuisines that continue to change over time.

Although Japanese have adopted Western cultural elements into Japanese weddings and receptions, Japaneseness is preserved through the strict and unique elements of Japanese nationality. As Benedict (1946) asserts: marriage exists to tie two families together, to introduce the newlywed couple into Japanese society, and to please their guests by applying a balanced reciprocity economic exchange system.

Since I composed this thesis while living in two different countries, my perspective towards Japanese weddings changed when I left Japan and came back to the U.S. As a Japanese woman, I have experienced longings toward Western cultures, as many other Japanese women. I did not expect to encounter the Japanese bride who was eager to wear a kimono for her wedding ceremony and reception. I even lost my objections towards the mini-drama like wedding reception, expensive gift money, Western cuisine, and returning gifts. Living inside of Japanese society, Japanese individuals seek to satisfy what society expects of them largely because the Japanese webs of tradition, obligation, and rules for social interaction are so tightly spun.

During the course of my fieldwork, I felt that the wedding reception was an arbitrary mixture of a replica of Western wedding and Japanese traditions. After I returned to the U.S., I



began analyzing my fieldwork from a different perspective. I opened a door and entered the Japanese wedding world as a stranger, and I was able to see the underlying traditions in the weddings. Inside of the Japanese weddings, Western cultures and Japanese culture are logically intermarried without harming one another; for example certain logic exists in the combination cuisines for the receptions. Consequently, reception meals of a contemporary Japanese wedding are a glimpse of “the invention of traditions” (Habsbawm and Ranger 1999). Shinojima of the Japanese food laboratory discussed Japanese cuisine and its modernization:

Modern Japanese cuisine is influenced by culture of court nobles, samurai families, or tea ceremony. However, it is legacy from cooks who had worked hard to satisfy desires of gourmets and merchants who gained economic power in Edo period. Although some foods have changed over time, their roots are still present. Food changes as an epoch changes, and there should be a rational reason for the birth of new foods (Namikawa and Shinojima 2000:3 [my translation]).

“Making-cultures” is the similar to the cooking of *pot-au-feu*; although people cultivate or arrange their own cultures, the basic ideologies are maintained; even if you make soup with different vegetables, it is still a soup. In turn, even if Japanese society continues to adopt Western cultures, Japanese culture will likely not be changed into Western culture. Japanese youth who have adapted or will adapt Western cultural elements into their weddings will feel nostalgia toward Western culture because these incorporated minglings and hybridities do not eliminate or replace Eastern elements, but are actually a re-articulation of what constitutes modern Japaneseness, or simply, what it means to be Japanese at the Millennium.

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Wedding ceremony and reception of Yabe family in 1995.

## APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

- Anoyo.* Heaven/Hell.
- Bonsai.* A dwarf(ed) tree in a pot: *bon* (a tray, salver) + *sai* (raising, culture, Cultivation, growing).
- Bureikou.* A free and easy party. Permission to relax: *bu* (negation) + *rei* (etiquette) + *kou* (practice, association).
- Butsumetsu.* Bad luck, the day when Buddha passed away: *butsu* (Buddha) + *metsu* (a fall, ruin).
- Chawanmushi.* A savory steamed egg custard with assorted ingredients: *chawan* (a bowl) + *mushi* (steam).
- danson johi.* A man is respected, a woman is lowly: *dan* (man) + *son* (respect) + *jo* (woman) + *hi* (scorn).
- Hade.* Ostentatious: *ha* (a group, a party) + *de/te* (a hand).
- Hotoke.* A Buddha.
- Ikebana.* A Japanese flower arrangement: *ike/iki* (alive) + *bana/hana* (flowers).
- Jimi.* Quiet: *ji* (the earth, land, a place) + *mi* (taste, flavor).
- Judo.* One of martial arts: *ju* (flexibility) + *do* (a way).
- Kado.* A Japanese flower arrangement: *ka* (flowers) + *do* (a way).
- Kaiseki* (会席). A Japanese formal meal to enjoy *sake*, drinking. The meal is originally from tea ceremony dishes: 会 *kai* (meet) + 席 *seki* (party, place, and seat).
- Kaiseki* (懷石). A Japanese formal meal to enjoy tea, and the original form of *Kaiseki*: 懷 *kai* (bosom, pocket) + 石 *seki* (stone).
- Kanji.* A Chinese character which is the origin of Japanese words: *Kan* (old China) + *ji* (a letter).
- Kanpai.* Both drink and toast: *kan* (dry, parched) + *pai* (a cup).
- Karate.* One of martial arts: *kara* (emptiness) + *te* (a hand).
- Katei.* A home, A family, a household: *ka* (a house, a home, a family, a household) + *tei* (a garden, yard).
- Katsuo-bushi.* One of dowries, and also is used for cooking to give flavor into a soup. A dried bonito: *katsuo* (a bonito) + *bushi/fushi* (a joint).
- Kendo.* One of martial arts: *ken* (a sword) + *do* (a way).
- Kekkon.* Marriage: *Ketsu* (tie/bind) + *Kon* (contract a marriage).
- Kekkon-Shiki.* Wedding ceremony: *Kekkon* + *Shiki* (ceremony).
- Kekkon-Hirouen.* Wedding reception: *Kekkon* + *Hirou* (announce, introduce) and *en* (a party, banquet).
- Koichiban.* Pickled vegetables: *ko* (flavor) + *ichiban* (the best).
- Konbu.* One of dowries and also is used for cooking to give flavor into a soup. A seaweed: *kon* (a root) + *bu* (cloth).
- Konoyo.* This world.
- Mochi.* A rice cake.
- Nakodo.* A matchmaker, a go-between: *naka* (relationship) + *do* (people).
- Nitsuke.* One of Japanese ways of cooking for fish, or vegetables boiled with soy sauce (and sugar): *ni* (boil, simmer) + *tsuke* (fix).
- Omiai.* A marriage meeting: *O* (particle for politeness) + *miai* (meeting).
- Rei.* A sprit, soul.
- Rokuyou/rokki.* A Buddhist calendar: *roku* (six) + *you/ki* (shine, sparkle, brighten).



*Sado*. Tea ceremony: *sa* (tea) + *do* (a way).

*San-san-kudo*. A ceremony of *sake* exchanging for a Shinto wedding ceremony:  
*san* (three) + *san* (three) + *kudo* (nine and moderation).

*Sekihan*. Red beans rice: *seki* (red) + *han* (rice).

*Senbu*. Morning is bad luck and night is good luck: *sen* (the tip, the end) + *bu*  
(a loss).

*Senshou*. Morning is lucky and afternoon is unlucky: *sen* (the tip, the end) + *shou*  
(win, a victory).

*Shakkou*. Worst lucky day, but noon time is lucky: *shaku* (red) + *kou* (a mouth, an  
opening).

*Suehiro*. One of dowries. A white fan: *sue* (the end, the close) + *hiro* (spread).

*Surume*. One of dowries. A dried squid.

*Taian*. The luckiest day: *tai* (big, great) + *an* (peace).

*Tofu*. Bean curd: *to* (bean) + *fu* (rotten).

*Tomobiki*. Morning and night are lucky, but noon is unlucky: *tomo* (a friend) +  
*hiki/biki* (pull).

*Tomoshiraga*. One of dowries. A linen string: *tomo* (together) + *shiraga* (gray  
hair).

*Yosemono*. A steamed dish made by mashed fish or eggs with assorted ingredients:  
*Yose* (assort) + *mono* (object, material) .

*Yuinou*. Engagement: *Yui* (tie/bind) + *nou* (dedicate).

## APPENDIX B. a. b: QUESTIONNAIRES (English and Japanese)

### APPENDIX B. a: QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOODS AND SPECIFIC OCCASIONS (English Version).

1. Please place foods in order (a ~ e) which is suitable for the following occasions, (I~ V). Please give reasons inside of { } for your answer.

a) French b) Italian c) Japanese d) Chinese cuisine e) Sushi

I. With friends: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

II. With boyfriends: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

III. With family: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

IV. With colleagues (welcome/farewell/ end-of-year party): 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

V. Wedding reception meals:

a. From guest's perspective: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

b. From bride's perspective: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

2. What is a reception meal for you?

(ex. Meaningful, symbolic, entertainment, substitute for lunch/dinner)

a. as a guest:

b. as a bride:

3. How many times have you been invited to a wedding reception?

a. 0

b. 1~2

c. 3~4

d. more than 5 times

4. At what time did the reception start? Please circle any answers.

a. 11:00am ~ 1:00pm

b. 1:00pm ~ 2:00pm

c. 2:00pm ~ 4:00pm

d. 5:00pm ~ 7:00pm

5. What was the most impressive food (gift) at the reception?

6. Have you had any problems with a reception meal?

7. Can you indicate your age and sex?

a. 20's

b. 30's

c. 40's

/ a. Female

b. Male

Thank you very much.

Please e-mail me if you have any comments about the questions.

sfukuto@hotmail.com

## APPENDIX B. b: QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOODS AND SPECIFIC OCCASIONS (Japanese Version).

食べ物と行事についてのアンケートにご協力をお願いします。

1. I ~ V にあげた場面において、貴方がふさわしい、食べたいと思う順番に a) ~ e) の料理を並べて下さい。また、1 番に選んだ料理について選んだ理由も { } の中に書いて下さい。

a) フランス料理   b) イタリア料理   c) 会石料理   d) 中華料理   e) 寿司

I. 友人との食事: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

II. 恋人との食事: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

III. 家族との食事: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

IV. 会社の行事 (歓迎・送別会、忘年会、等): 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

V. 結婚披露宴の食事:

a. 招待客として: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

b. 招待者として: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) { }

2. 貴方は、披露宴の食事についてどう思いますか・感じますか?

(例: それぞれの料理に意味がある。シンボル。おもてなし料理。昼食・夕食の代わり。)

a. 招待客として:

b. 招待者として:

3. これまで何度披露宴に出席されましたか?

a. 0   b. 1-2   c. 3-4   d. 5 回以上

4. 貴方が今までに出席した披露宴の開始時刻で当てはまるもの全てに○をつけて下さい。

a. 午前 11:00-午後 1:00 頃   b. 午後 1:00-午後 2:00 頃

b. 午後 2:00-午後 4:00 頃   d. 午後 5:00-午後 7:00 頃   e. その他 ( )

5. これまで出席された披露宴で、心に残った食べ物 (引き出物でも含む) は何ですか?

6. これまで出席された披露宴のお食事について困った事や嫌な思い出はありますか?

7. 貴方の年齢は? /性別は?

a. 20 代   b. 30 代   c. 40 代 / a. 女   b. 男

ご協力ありがとうございました。

コメント等が御座いましたら電子メールでお願いします。 sfukuto@hotmail.com

## APPENDIX C: THE RECEPTION MEAL OF THE ODA-YOKOMORI FAMILY



a. An *hors d'œuvre* (right) and crab and shark fin soup (left)



b. Fish with oriental sauce



c. A sirloin steak with *Calvados* sauce



d. Fried marine food with Chinese XO sauce



e. *Chakin-zushi* (sushi)



f. *Sarashina- soba* (noodle)



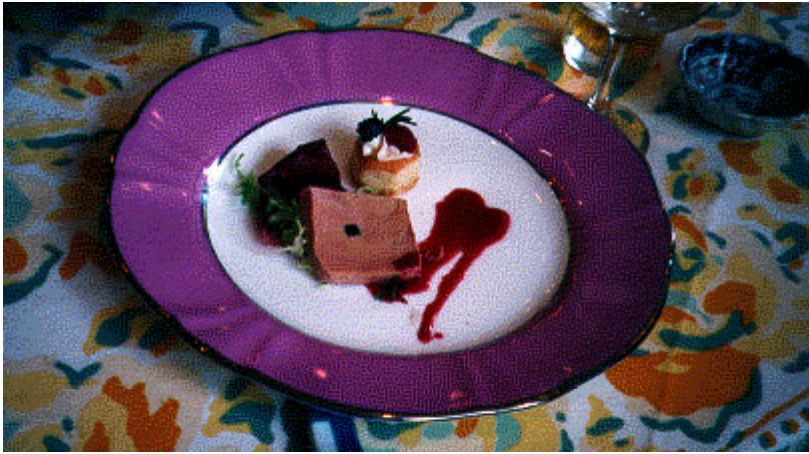
g. A wedding cake



h. Fruits punch



## APPENDIX D: THE RECEPTION MEAL OF THE TOGASHI-MORO FAMILY



a. *Foie gras terrine* with cream cheese and berry sauce



b. A savory steamed egg custard

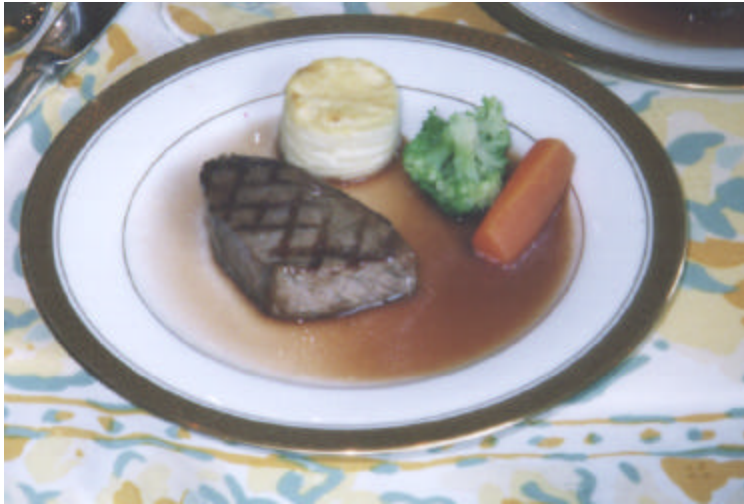


c. A sea bream sashimi



d. A lobster





e. A beefsteak



f. Scallop pies



g. Shrimp dumplings



h. Fried crabs



i. Sushi



j. Champagne sorbet



k. Melon

## **VITA**

Satomi Fukutomi, the daughter of Hideyasu and Katsuko Fukutomi, was born in Tochigi, Japan, on March 6, 1968.

Satomi Fukutomi received an associate degree from Musashino Women's University in Tokyo and worked for JAL CARD Inc. in Tokyo between 1988 and 1996. In the spring of 1997, she enrolled in Louisiana State University and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology in December 1999. In the spring of 2000, she enrolled in the Graduate School of Louisiana State University to pursue a Master of Arts degree in Anthropology, which she will receive in May 2002.